



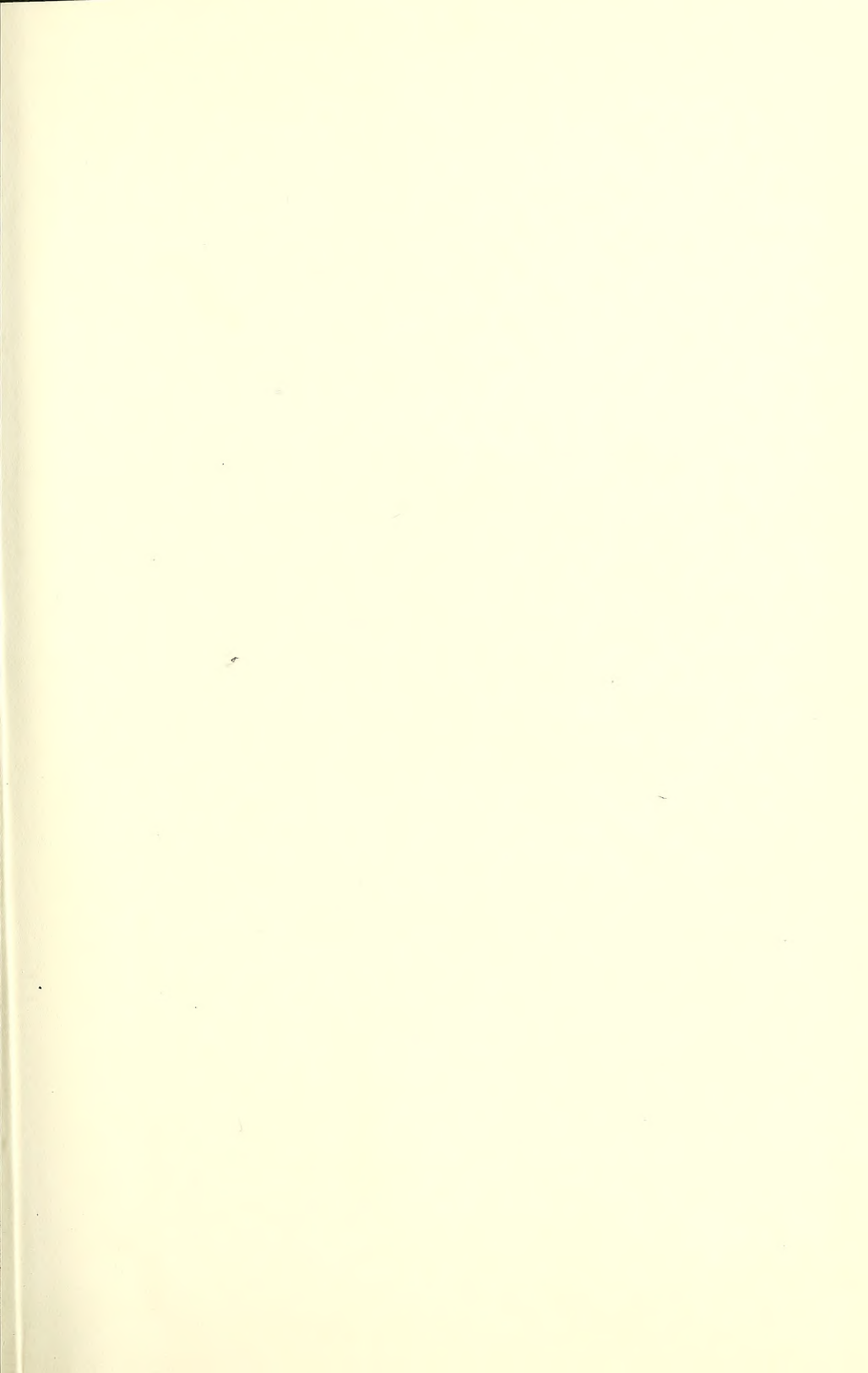


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*Disciples Div. House*

# THE SCROLL

The Journal of the Campbell Institute

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**THE WILLETT LIBRARY IN 1955-1956  
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IN THIS SUMMER'S READING SATCHEL**



*THE SCROLL*, the Bulletin of the Campbell Institute, published quarterly in July, October, January, and April.

The Campbell Institute, founded in 1896, is an association for ministers and laymen of the Disciples of Christ for the encouragement of scholarship, comradeship, and intelligent discipleship.

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## The Campbell Institute At Des Moines

### "MID-NIGHT SESSIONS"

Immediately following the close of the evening sessions of the Convention, in parlors of the Convention Auditorium.

Monday, October 1, 1956

Dr. J. C. Brauer, Dean of the Federated Theological Faculty of the University of Chicago.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE EDUCATION OF THE MINISTRY

Tuesday, October 2, 1956

Business meeting and program to be announced.



# Dr. Winfred Ernest Garrison

*Marie Moore, Houston, Texas*

In the upstairs studio at Dr. Winfred Ernest Garrison's home there is a plaster head easily identified, by the long nose and soulful eyes, as a likeness of Cyrano de Bergerac.

"Notice any resemblance to anyone else?" white-haired Dr. Garrison asked with a sly grin. He puffed on his pipe a moment and then explained:

"I sculptured my own head in clay one time. After I cast it, the clay was still moist.

"I pulled on the nose, pushed in the cheeks, and added a little goatee. And there was Cyrano."

Dr. Garrison has a personality as versatile as the clay (or rather, the plastic, his wife having ruled that clay is too messy) he manipulates in his art studio.

He is an author, poet, world traveler, ordained minister, classical scholar and a diligent worker in organizations to promote interfaith religious understanding. His sculpture, mostly portraits and inscriptions in bronze relief, is exhibited in churches in America and Ireland. He is a former college president, and he has dabbled in archeology and farming.

At 80, although he looks 20 years younger in his casual summer suit and natty bow tie, he has become chairman of the department of philosophy and religion at the University of Houston, where he has taught since 1951.

He still writes copiously, appears regularly on television programs and is outlining a course in New Testament Greek which he will teach at the U of H this fall.

He expects to attend a conference on Moslem-Christian co-operation in Europe in 1956 (he was a delegate to a similar meeting at Bhamdoun, Lebanon, this year). On Sundays this summer he has been a guest preacher at services of Unitarian, Congregationalist and other churches, although the Disciples of Christ is his own denomination.

And in his spare time he plays the violin.

After he retired as professor of church history at the University of Chicago in 1943, Dr. Garrison devoted most of his time to writing and literary criticism until he came to Houston four years ago.

"At least, you can say that I chose Texas in my years of discretion," he remarked. "When most of my friends at Chicago retired, they moved to Florida. But I didn't want to join a colony for the superannuated; pitching horseshoes isn't quite stimulating enough for me.

"Besides, I come from a long-lived family. My mother lived to be 94 and my father 89. My grandmother died at 90; she was killed in a carriage accident returning from a visit with her older sister."

The busy life Dr. Garrison is living these days is just a continuation of the pace he set early in life. He breezed through grade school in Saint Louis, spent a couple of years in school in England and was graduated from Eureka College in Eureka, Ill. before he was 18.

"My ambition was to be a professor of Greek, and I decided my AB degree from Eureka wasn't impressive enough, so I went to Yale for another one," he said.

"At Yale I found out that my background in the classics was pretty good. And I have a healthy respect for the little prairie colleges, I visited Eureka this summer, on its 100th anniversary."

Dr. Garrison has high praise for the social studies offered in colleges and universities today, although he has found a great deal of satisfaction in the more classical education which he himself began at Eureka.

"I was studying Latin, Greek and logic mostly," he said, "and I remember making a remark, when I was a student, that I later decided was very wise.

"I wasn't very articulate then, and a friend suggested that I should study more English and less Latin and Greek I replied, 'I believe that 10 years from now I will use English better because of studying Latin and Greek.'"

Anyone who was watching Dr. Garrison's Wednesday evening television program on Channel 8 (now suspended while he is on vacation) can testify to his fluent speech these days. The camera finds him in an easy chair, chatting informally and informatively about history, the arts, religion, or whatever subject he may choose.

The program, his students report, is similar to his manner in class.

An interest in religion came naturally to Dr. Garrison, since his father was for many years editor of the Christian-Evangelist, a Disciple of Christ newspaper. And religious learning tied in conveniently with his classical studies.

So when he received his Yale diploma in 1894, he went to the University of Chicago to take bachelor of divinity and doctor of philosophy degrees.

After receiving his doctorate in 1897, he remained at the university for a year as a history assistant and an instructor at the Disciples Divinity House, a part of the the university's theological school.

In 1898 he went to Butler College, now Butler University, at Indianapolis, as professor of church history and Hebrew. In 1904, before he was 30 years old, he became president of Butler College.



The presidency was a turning point in his life in several ways. His father, James Harvey Garrison, had hoped that his son would follow him as editor of the *Christian-Evangelist*.

"I was assistant editor for four years, while I was teaching at Butler, but the work didn't satisfy me," Dr. Garrison said. "When I was offered the presidency at Butler even my father agreed that I should take it. But I kept writing for the *Christian-Evangelist* for 12 years."

As a college president Dr. Garrison literally almost worked himself to death. He taught several classes, because he enjoyed knowing the students, while carrying a full load of administrative work. And he spent a great deal of time raising endowments to improve the school's financial condition.

After two years at that pace, he found himself ill with tuberculosis, and he took his physician's advice and moved to the high, dry climate of New Mexico.

"I thought I was through as a teacher," Dr. Garrison said calmly, puffing on his pipe and making no mention of the emotional upheaval his illness must have cost him.

With his young wife—he had married Miss Annie Gaines Dye on his 26th birthday, Oct. 1, 1900—he moved to the Santa Fe vicinity, studied up on archeology and began exploring the Indian ruins of Northern New Mexico. He also became interested in an irrigation project.

"New Mexico was still a territory then, and sparsely settled," he explained. "They had trouble getting school teachers, and the superintendent of public education for the territory had heard of my experience.

"He offered me a job as principal of the high school at Santa Fe. The school was eight years old and they had had eight principals. I was disgusted with the irrigation project, so I took it.

"There were 45 students in the high school. I let the city superintendent do the administrative work, and I taught and had fun with the kids. On week ends 30 or more of them would join me, in wagons and on horseback, and we would go out to the ruins on excavation trips."

From Santa Fe he went to New Mexico Normal College at Las Vegas as president in 1907, and his chief recollection of that interlude was the atmosphere of "crime and general cussedness" in the town.

"Someone tried to burglarize our house twice in one year," he said. "Once my wife sat at the door with a gun in her lap all night because there was a prowler around."

A happier time began in 1908 when he became president of the New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts at Las Cruces, in the fertile Mesilla Valley.

"I bought a ranch when we moved to Las Cruces," he said. "I never



had been on a farm before, but I started experimenting with cantaloupes and onions. My wife said she could smell the onions half a mile away."

He imported some Valencia onion seeds and read directions for raising them in cold frames. Adjusting the directions to the New Mexico climate, he planted seeds in the fall and transplanted them, four inches apart in a row, in the spring.

"It took 25 man-days of work to transplant an acre of onions. That cost \$25 then. And when the onions were grown, each bulb touched the next one; four-inch onions. And I sold the seeds."

The Garrisons designed and built a traditional Spanish-style house on their ranch. It was constructed of adobe brick made on the spot and built around a patio.

"Our house is a convent now," he said. "It's called the Convento del Buen Pastor. It was used once as a refuge for nuns from Mexico.

"I stopped by there on a trip not long ago, and the nun at the gate was rather suspicious when I explained that I wanted to look at the place because it used to be my home. Then I asked about a date palm we had planted in the patio. The last time I had seen it, the tree was up to the second-story level.

"The nun told me they had cut down the palm because it got too big. She got over her suspicion and invited me in, but I didn't go."

Dr. Garrison obviously loves mountains, rivers and tall trees, and he describes eloquently the scenery of New Mexico and other places he has lived in and visited. His Las Cruces home he considered a beauty spot, but his reminiscences betrayed no regret about leaving there for California.

He explained that move by saying he "got into politics."

The time was 1910, and plans were being made for a constitutional convention to prepare New Mexico for admission to statehood. Dr. Garrison argued for a citizens' assembly, without regard for political party affiliation, to form the convention, but the proponents of political parties won out.

"Both the Democrats and Republicans offered to nominate me as a delegate to the convention," he said, "but I turned them down, much to my wife's disgust. Then a Republican delegate became ill, I was asked to replace him, and I accepted.

"The state went Democratic in its first election, and that put my job in jeopardy at the A and M College. I had a contract through June, 1913, but when that time came the Democrats replaced me with a Democratic college president.

"I was offered a law partnership by one of my friends in Las Cruces, but I told him I didn't think there was room for an honest lawyer in New

Mexico. My friend said, 'How do you know? It's never been tried.' "

Dr. Garrison chuckled and lighted his pipe again.

"So I went to California and decided to start a preparatory school for boys."

The fact that the Garrisons' children were approaching high school age influenced the decision to open the California school. Their son, Frederic Garrett, now is a mechanical engineer and designer with a business in Detroit, Mich. Their daughter, Mrs. Neil Crawford, is the wife of a Presbyterian minister in Washington, Ind.

"I had two narrow escapes from getting rich when I went to the West Coast," Dr. Garrison continued.

"While I was looking for a site for the school, a real estate man at Long Beach tried to sell me Signal Hill. That's the biggest oil field in California now. And another one tried to sell me some Huntington Beach property. I turned him down, and there were oil wells all over it two years later."

Dr. Garrison chose, instead, some acreage at Claremont, with a scenic canyon, fragrant orange groves and a mountainous forest preserve in the background.

As in New Mexico, he remained as much a teacher as an administrator, and the Claremont School for Boys featured regular horseback trips over the mountain trails.

Dr. Garrison coached basketball at his school and played a little baseball and tennis. The sports, added to his other outdoor activities, helped repair his health. In 1920 he was asked to return to the University of Chicago.

After a summer trial period, when he was hesitant about returning to city life, he accepted and sold the California school. He served as dean of the Disciples Divinity House several years, then was church history professor until his retirement. In 1953 he was awarded the title of professor emeritus.

Shortly after he returned to Chicago, Dr. Garrison became literary editor of the *Christian Century*. He continued writing book reviews for that publication until last December, and he estimates that he reviewed 10,000 books over a period of 32 years.

While he was in California Dr. Garrison served as pastor of a church for four years, in addition to his other work, and he continued writing all through his years in the West.

His first book, "Wheeling Through Europe," was published in 1900 after he had spent three summers bicycling over the Continent.

Most of his other books have been of a theological nature. The first of these, also published in 1900, concerned the founder of the Disciples of Christ denomination. Its title is "Alexander Campbell's Theology."

"Catholicism and the American Mind" came out in 1928, during Al Smith's campaign for the presidency, and met with favorable reviews in both Protestant and Catholic publications, as well as the general press.

His latest book, soon to be published by the Bethany Press at Saint Louis, is "Christian Unity and the Disciples of Christ."

He has a chapter in a book on Moslem and Christian cooperation called "The Road to Bhamdoun" that resulted from his trip to Lebanon last year. And he is writing a section on reviews and criticism for a book called "Effective Writing About Religion."

Mrs. Garrison came in to serve refreshments on a delicate enameled tray which she noted was a souvenir of the Lebanon mission, and she joined the literary discussion.

"He must show you some of his poetry," she insisted gently.

Dr. Garrison obliged by leaning back in his chair and reaching into a bookcase. Side by side there reposed volumes of Pepys' diaries, "The Oxford Companion to English Literature," "Fossilman in France" and "Cartoons by George Price."

He skipped those and pulled out a book called "Quotable Poems."

"I have a couple in here that are fair samples," he said. "The other books are all upstairs."

One of the selections was this one, titled "Love and Life:"

Oh, Love and Death go ever hand in hand,  
For poison lurks within the magic cup  
That Love to thirsty lips is lifting up;  
And those who tread the heavenly height must stand  
Upon a dizzy verge. Love's stern command  
Summons to battle, wounds, and sudden death;  
No langorous whisper borne on perfumed breath,  
But ringing call to dare by sea and land.  
But Love brings every gift of joy and grace,  
Lightens the darkness, gives new life for old,  
And touches all things with her mystic wand,  
Like Midas turning all base things to gold,  
Making a temple every common place.  
For Love and Life go ever hand in hand.

It was Mrs. Garrison, again gently insistent, who persuaded Dr. Garrison to describe briefly some of his more important sculptural works.

"I did a bronze portrait of Thomas Campbell for a Presbyterian church near Belfast, Ireland," he said briefly. "He was Alexander Campbell's father, and he was pastor of that church. I was there in 1937 and selected the location for the portrait, but I haven't seen it since it was hung."



His bronze relief portrait of Alexander Campbell hangs at Bethany College, and he now is working on a head of Campbell, the founder of the Disciples of Christ denomination.

"I'm working from a portrait of him as a young man, and after I cast it I'll make it older," he explained.

Dr. Garrison did a relief portrait of his own father which is in the Union Avenue Christian Church at Saint Louis where his father was a member and elder for 57 years.

Throughout his studio—among the Navajo rugs, Indian pottery, a framed page from an old Italian mass book and other mementoes of his travels—are masks, busts and classical figures representative of his sculptural work.

"I did some of the masks one summer when we had a house at Taxco, Mexico," he said. "I wanted to show the different types of faces I saw."

His sense of humor crops out in several places. For example, there is Andromeda, of Greek mythology, the traditional, hopeless figure waiting to be devoured by the sea monster.

Dr. Garrison's Andromeda is about eight inches tall. The "monster" facing her is a piquant, inch-high sea horse that looks like a Walt Disney character.

"I decided maybe the monster wasn't as fierce as the Greeks thought," Dr. Garrison remarked dryly.

Leading the way back downstairs, he paused to comment on the graceful iron gates, with enameled figures in the center of each side, which he brought from a European trip and installed in the archway between his living room and dining room.

"I call these the pearly gates. And that's Pearl herself," he pointed his pipestem at one of the figures.

Dr. Garrison has attended almost every recent world meeting concerning interfaith co-operation. At some he has been a delegate of his own denomination, and at others he has been a consultant, not representing any one denomination. He prefers to attend as a consultant.

His studies as a religious historian have by no means been confined to Christianity. He knows Arabic, among a variety of other ancient and modern languages, and he has read part of the Koran in the original.

Like the handful of other serious religious scholars over the country, he has been quite interested in the recent discovery, in caves near the Dead Sea, of legible Hebrew scrolls dating back to close to the time of Christ.

He read the manuscript of the Book of Isaiah which was found in the caves and which is now at the University of Chicago, and he marveled at the similarity of the ancient and more modern Hebrew script.

His interest in the scrolls led him, while he was on his trip to Lebanon last February, to visit the caves where the first manuscripts were found.

"I saw a Bikini bathing suit in action for the first time at the Dead Sea," he interposed suddenly, in the middle of a serious discussion of the scrolls. "The girl wearing it was very well equipped. I think that belies the statement that there is no life in the Dead Sea."

## "The Great New Fact of Our Era"

*Robert B. Lewis, Youngstown, Ohio*

The concern of this paper is to evaluate Archbishop William Temple's statement that "The ecumenical movement is the great new fact of our era." But a judgment upon the ecumenical movement, in these days of the church's internal disorder, can originate neither in solitary reflection nor in a supposed immersion in the whole body of Christ; rather must it arise out of a particular, limited tradition within Christianity. To speak responsibly means to speak as part of a self-conscious community of the faithful to the church throughout the world.

Therefore, I must speak (and desire to speak) from within my context, that community of Christians known as "Disciples of Christ." Naturally, my explicit position will not coincide with that of every "Disciple," but it can be shown to follow from the same sources from which flow most Disciple thinking. These sources are the "founding fathers" of the brotherhood, especially Alexander Campbell. To that extent, then, my words will be an attempt to demonstrate what the "Disciples of Christ" as a church can and should say about the ecumenical movement in the light of the best in their tradition.

What is there in the Disciple heritage that can be related to the present enterprise of Christianity in its search after wholeness? It is my position that our heritage contains abundant material for the formulation of a doctrine of the nature of the church which has manifold correlations with the ecumenical spirit. Let us turn, first, to an examination of this material in order to formulate a "Disciple" judgment concerning the ecumenical movement.

Robert Richardson, one of Alexander Campbell's earliest spokesmen and co-editor for a period with him of the *Millennial Harbinger*, presents a basis for our enquiry in his analysis of the reformation movement. He writes. "When men, who, in the deliberate exercise of judgment, have attached themselves to different religious bodies, are able by the elevating influences of divine truth and love, to rise above the narrow limits of sectarian prejudice, and to embrace each other as children of a common Father, and heirs of a common inheritance, the power of these divine principles is shown . . . There is, then, through the influence of divine

truth, and in direct opposition to the genius of sectarianism, a union of heart between the pious . . . But this is merely a spiritual union—a secret sympathy. It is an invisible union, while there is, at the same moment, a most visible disunity. It is a star of hope, however . . . It is the spirit of God moving upon the face of a chaos . . . and may we not hope to see a visible as there is an invisible unity in the family of God . . . It is by a visible union among Christians alone, that the world can be convinced of the divine mission of Jesus Christ. Christianity, though a spiritual religion, is not such a religion disembodied. It rules the body as the soul. It has its externals as its internals; its form as well as its power. It must be recognized by its results, and among these there are none more characteristic than unity, peace and good will among men . . . Christian union and intercommunion were the original and ruling thoughts with those with whom this movement began.”<sup>1</sup>

This love of unity, though, was not a sheer relativism in which the importance of criteria was ignored. For these men, there was a standard, and this standard was “the writings of the apostles of Jesus Christ.”<sup>2</sup> The departure from the sects was not to be in just any direction desired by human whim, but rather it was to be in a particular direction: “Is it not obvious that all lines drawn from the circumference of any circle towards its center, will meet at the same point? As all sects forsake their systems, and return to the apostolic gospel and institutions, they will meet in one and the same centre . . . ”<sup>3</sup>

This standard, however, was not to be applied as a rigid canon including all particulars of church order and faith. What shall the preacher of union say? “That every truth is alike important? No, certainly; for then on earth there never could be a union.”<sup>4</sup> Rather then this: “Nothing is proposed as a bond of peace on earth other than the bond of peace in heaven, which is all comprehended in the cardinal and sublime proposition—Jesus the Nazarene is the Messiah the Son of God.”<sup>5</sup>

This, then, is the objective criterion which, in its fuller expression by Campbell resembles closely what is today known as the “kerygma.”<sup>6</sup> The application of this criterion to the problems of faith and order is controlled by the doctrine of the differences between faith and opinion. “Faith” is correlated with the matter of revelation and is that which all Christians hold in common. “Opinion” is correlated with speculations beyond revealed matter, or in the absence of revelation, or, most generally, on subjects non-essential for the life of faith. Although men could never unite on the basis of an orthodoxy of opinions, union on matters of faith alone is possible. “We do not ask them to give up their opinions—we ask them only not to impose them upon others . . . The faith is public property; opinions are, and always have been private property.”<sup>7</sup>



A specific method of applying the objective criterion of scripture is the distinction between "principle" and "mode," with principle being the concern of faith and mode the concern of opinion. There is, writes Campbell, "in the New Institution . . . no ritual, liturgy, nor manual . . . There is nothing of that sort in the Christian economy. No mode of observing the Lord's day is suggested in the apostolic writings. In this Christians are left to the discretion of full grown men, to the government of principle. All things are to be done decently and in order; but the modes of decency and order in the celebration of these Christian institutions are nowhere pointed out . . . There is a principle in everything instituted. And all the principles of obedience, all the principles of action . . . are reducible to one great principle, sometimes called the new commandment . . . love . . . The obedience of faith is also the obedience of love . . . Hence all the exhortations to religious and moral observances are drawn from the love of God to us."<sup>8</sup>

Life in the Christian church, then, is "the service of love,"<sup>9</sup> and the activity which mediates between the high principles of faith and particular concrete situations is "the love of God, shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit."<sup>10</sup> The new commandment of Jesus to his followers, that they should *love* one another, is the most ultimate *method* of Christian inter-relatedness, just as his prayer that they might be *one*, is the most ultimate *goal* for the structure of the church. If the concept "love" be interpreted most generally it includes the action whereby each "member" of the "body" of Christ takes into account in its decisions the reality of all the other members. The inner life of all members is taken into the inner life of each, and each one lives by participation in the life of the total body. Each one is responsible for the total reality and therefore each judgment will arise from a context in which particular demands are inter-fused with the demands of the entire church. The unity lies in the oneness of the "head" whose power sustains all parts. The diversity lies in the variety of particular concrete situations. The unity in diversity lies in the function of the total life of the church as part of the context in which each particular judgment is made.

## II

This statement of a view of the church from within the heritage of "the reformation of the nineteenth century" has many obvious relations to the outlooks characteristic of the ecumenical movement. I would like to discuss three propositions that seem to suggest themselves from the above material and one general judgment which is the major purpose of the paper.

The first proposition is that the Disciple position anticipated much of present ecumenical thinking and finds in the ecumenical movement an

expression of its own deepest concerns.

The second proposition is that the ecumenical movement brings a sharp criticism upon certain aspects of Disciple thought.

The third proposition is that the Disciple position provides a basis for healthy criticism of the ecumenical movement itself.

The general judgment, finally, is that as a Disciple, I would endorse the statement of Archbishop Temple quoted at the start with the reservations to be discussed in considering the third proposition.

As to the first proposition, there is no originality being claimed for the Disciples in their anticipation of the ecumenical spirit. A study of the sources shows the derivative character of each of the elements of their witness. The emphasis, rather, is upon the essential coherence of the Disciple position outlined above with that of the present ecumenical movement and therefore the satisfaction which a Disciple can enjoy in seeing his particular concerns writ large upon the world-wide church. Most obviously, there is coherence as to the urgency of the need for the unity of the church. As Richardson observed, it was love of unity above all else that prompted the early Disciples to their task of reformation. Furthermore, it was the apprehension of an existing unity within the church which gave them hope, and the realization of the need for formal, bodily expression of this unity which gave them a calling. In a similar vein, Daniel Jenkins writes that the ecumenical vision reveals "a unity lying behind all the differences between the churches which it is the duty of those who see it to bring out and express in the midst of the contradictions and confusions of authority and liturgy and teaching and organization which arise both because of the sinfulness of men and because of the incalculable movement of the Spirit amidst the changes of history."<sup>11</sup>

This same author makes a point similar to Campbell's concern over the objective criterion which controls the movement toward unity when he writes, "What brings us together in ecumenical activity is not enthusiasm for organizational unity but a fresh understanding, given in our encounter with each other, of what the New Testament means by the Church of Jesus Christ . . ."<sup>12</sup> Or as Gustaf Aulen observes, "a unity based on subjective experiences and qualifications must break. It cannot but lead to repeated divisions. The true basis of unity is not a subjective but an objective one: Christ acting through the Word and the Sacraments"<sup>13</sup> Campbell's metaphor of Christians meeting at the center of a circle is called to mind by W. A. Visser't Hooft's words, "There can be no real representation of the *Una Sancta* until the churches have turned in a new way to the Word of God, until they have discovered their sickness, until they have found something of that clarity and certainty of preaching and

witness which characterized the New Testament churches, until they are truly 'becoming the Church' and meet each other on the level of that *metanoia*."<sup>14</sup>

At a third level, this same coherence is to be seen in regard to the doctrine of "participation" by each "member" in the life of the whole "body," which was the generalization of the concept "love." The "ecumenical vision," writes Mr. Jenkins, ". . . enables members of a particular church to see other churches as they are 'in Christ' and to see Christ manifest in the other Churches."<sup>15</sup> It is this ". . . re-interpretation of each church's particular vocation in the setting of the whole"<sup>16</sup> which, in part, constitutes the contemporary expression of the new commandment that we Christians love one another.

In these three ways, the goal of unity, the criterion of the Word of God, and the method of love, the Disciple position anticipates and is expressed in present day ecumenical thinking.

Our second proposition stated, "That the ecumenical movement brings a sharp criticism upon certain aspects of Disciple thought." This criticism is made necessary because, at each of the three levels just mentioned, Disciples tend to "fall away" from the purity of their position into the evil appropriate to each level. Their plea for "union and inter-communion" has had a way of fading out as the glow of a mechanical "restorationism" has become more and more brilliant. It is when this happens that Disciples must stand judged by their brothers in the ecumenical movement and listen to such apt reminders as that of Mr. Jenkins: "The New Testament does not present us with a model church whose external characteristics we should strive to copy in every detail nor even with an ideal church to which we should aspire. It confronts us with the presence of the living Christ in the Spirit, who reconciles men to God and through that reconciliation gives them a new relationship of unity and peace with each other and guides them through their lives."<sup>17</sup>

At the second level, Disciples are always in danger and often guilty of turning the Word of God into an encyclopedia of church rules. They are always tempted to label their "opinions" and their "modes" with the rubrics of "faith" and "principles." The dogmatic insistence upon immersion baptism is one example of this tendency. At times of such "apostasy" by Disciples from their own principles, the discipline of a lively ecumenical conversation would be most healthful for all concerned. Such proclamations about the nature of the "Word" of God as those of Karl Barth might do wonders. He writes ". . . The Church is a congregation, a subject which is confronted by and controlled by another primary subject: Jesus Christ as absolute Lord . . . The congregation is preserved and is saved by the ever-new acts of its Lord. The



meaning of its life and its calling consists in being continually open to Him, ready to perceive these 'signs of His appearing.' ”<sup>18</sup>

At the final level, Disciples find it hard always “to see other churches as they are ‘in Christ,’ ” to formulate their “particular vocation in the setting of the whole.”<sup>19</sup> But the very existence of the ecumenical movement makes it impossible for Disciples to be as provincial and chauvinistic as in former days. The reality and the richness of the other Christian traditions are too obvious to be just ignored. And through the interchanges made possible in the present conversations, it becomes much easier for Disciples to approach other churches in a “positive and expectant way.”<sup>20</sup>

The third proposition states “that the Disciple position provides a basis for healthy criticism of the ecumenical movement itself.” The emphasis here is upon the word “healthy” and the word “criticism.” It is healthy because the fundamental positions of the Disciples and the ecumenical movement are so coherent. Criticism from the Disciples (if it is responsible) would be criticism in terms of a common body of essentials and thus pertinent to the healthy growth of the new movement. In a sense it would be the ecumenical movement speaking to itself.

The particular criticisms could be numerous, but there are three which seem dominant. First, the Disciples can be on constant guard lest the movement for the wholeness of the body of Christ become merely a place where particular churches are consolidated and strengthened in their separateness. Alexander Campbell constantly warned that any union which was only a federation of sects would be dangerous to the church. Second, the Disciples, along with other “free churches” can oppose any attempt to gain unity by the imposition of the polity of some dominant church or group of churches upon all the rest. The contributions of the free churches are important and must form part of the total context out of which the World Church might arise (if there is to be one). Finally, the Disciples are well fitted to oppose any attempt to gain unity on the basis of creedal conformity. The doctrine of faith and opinion, if sharpened up in the light of present thought, could serve to protect the freedom of the Christian man to interpret the scriptures in the light of his own understanding and persuasion. The existing formula “Christ as God and Saviour” should be questioned seriously by Disciples, both on sheer theological grounds of adequacy as a symbol and on the grounds of the danger of imposing a creed not found in scriptures as the article of faith and the ground of unity within the church.

In the light of these three propositions, our final judgment concerning Archbishop Temple’s statement, and therefore concerning the significance

of the ecumenical movement from the Disciple standpoint becomes obvious. The ecumenical movement is the "great new fact of our era." It expresses the most urgent task laid upon the church in our day. Until its hopes are consummated, the primary calling of the church to reconcile all things to God in Christ will be performed lamely and inefficiently. "That they might be one" comes as our challenge, and in so far as the ecumenical movement is obedient to that vocation it is the great new fact of this and of many eras. If the movement wanders from this calling into one or another of the tempting side paths, it will negate itself and its greatness. Our hope and prayer is that we who are the human side of the ecumenical movement will not allow it to wander into futility but will keep it ever responsive to the Spirit of its Lord in "the service of love."

- 1 Richardson, Robert, "Reformation," *Millennial Harbinger*, 1848, pp. 34, 35.
- 2 Campbell, Alexander, *Millennial Harbinger*, 1832, p. 3.
- 3 *Ibid.* p. 36.
- 4 Campbell, Alexander, *Millennial Harbinger*, 1836, p. 28.
- 5 *Ibid.* p. 29.
- 6 Smith, B. L., ed., *Millennial Harbinger Abridged*, vol. II, Standard Publishing Co., Cincinnati, 1902, p. 36. There, he writes that the "Divine summary of the faith" is "that Christ died as a sin offering for our sins; that he was buried in the earth some seven and thirty hours; that he rose very early in the morning of the third day from his interment; that he, after giving many demonstrations of his personal identity, did visibly ascend to the heaven of heavens, and sat down at the right hand of his God and Father; and was on the first Pentecost following, publicly proclaimed in the city of Jerusalem, in the presence of thousands assembled from every nation under heaven, in honor of God's descent to Mount Sinai, in Arabia; and so publicly proclaimed that he, the lately crucified Jesus of Nazareth was then Divinely constituted Lord of the Universe—the King of kings, the Lord of lords—the ultimate Judge of the living and of the dead . . ."
- 7 *Ibid.* p. 37.
- 8 Campbell, Alexander, "Essays on Man in his Primitive State etc," *Christian Baptist*, revised by D. S. Burnet, Bosworth, Chase & Hall, Cincinnati, 1870, p. 657.
- 9 *Loc. cit.*
- 10 *Ibid.* p. 658.
- 11 Jenkins, Daniel, *Congregationalism: A Restatement*, Harper & Bros., N. Y., 1954, pp. 11, 12.
- 12 *Ibid.* p. 11.
- 13 *Man's Disorder and God's Design*, Harper & Bros., N. Y., 1948, p. 29.
- 14 *Ibid.* pp. 183 f.
- 15 Jenkins, *op. cit.* p. 12.
- 16 *Ibid.* p. 15.
- 17 *Ibid.* p. 16.
- 18 *Man's Disorder and God's Design*, p. 67.
- 19 Jenkins, *op. cit.*, pp. 11, 15.
- 20 *Ibid.* p. 17.

# The Meaning of Biblical Authority in the Mid-Twentieth Century

*Clyde C. Smith, Chicago, Illinois*

The term "authority," being generally defined as that which has the right to command or to act, or as that which is appealed to in support of opinions or actions, does not alone provide us with the key to an adequate understanding of the use of the Bible. For if we consider that the Bible is "authority" in this sense, then we must admit that there is some special power in the particular written words which constitute the

books of the Bible in a manner similar to the many magical documents of the ancient world. That is, we must consider the Bible only as an external influence upon us, not that to which we may relate ourselves in dialogue. We act because we are commanded to do so by some Biblical passage, or we make an assertion because we find in the Bible support for our claim. Or what is more likely, we accept the Bible because the tradition which claims our loyalty accepts the Bible in just this sense. Thus the Bible is our "authority" because it justifies our thoughts and actions, or the thoughts and actions of the group (or church or denomination) to which we belong.

However, if we view this kind of "authority" with discretion, we see that it is really not authority at all. It too has an authority, a higher power to which it appeals. The Bible then is not authority, but authority is vested in the group or person using it. As long as this claim is made, or as long as the group uses the Bible as authority in this external sense, the real authority rests not with the Bible but with the presuppositions of its users. The Bible is "authority" because its words are interpreted so that they support the interpreters.

If this kind of process is at work, how may we claim the Bible as authority? In what sense is it ever possible for the Bible to be more than that which we or our group reads into it?

Before attempting to answer these questions, let us consider the implications involved in claiming the Bible as this kind of external "authority." First of all, this view looks at the Bible only as groups of written words which have been somehow given an infallible character. The words and their particular order are claimed to be "inspired"—to be sure, by some kind of "divine being" (the nature of which is a related problem). Secondly, the arrangements of words are given a unity from sentence to sentence, page to page, and book to book by virtue of the presuppositions of the reader. Every passage can be made to support every other passage, taken in any order. A single passage can stand as representative of all the rest: it can be used as "authority." Finally, the words once set down have one and only one meaning. This meaning remains the same for all ages; there is no possibility of varying interpretations (at least theoretically). It is interesting to note that *the* interpretation is essentially the same as the position of the interpreter.

It is apparent from just such a casual glance at these implications that the real authority of the Bible rests, as we have said, not in the Bible itself, but in those "reading" it. And yet, if there is to be any claim of Biblical authority, there must be some reference to inspiration, unity, and revelation. We must therefore turn to a general consideration of the Bible.



The Bible is, and has been, *the* Book of Faith of all those claiming to lie within the Judaeo-Christian heritage. And in so far as Western culture finds this heritage as one of its roots, this faith in some sense pervades all of that culture. Before the Christian era, the Bible—then only the Old Testament—constituted the documentary testimony of the Hebrew people to their faith. With the advent of Jesus of Nazareth, who knew well the Scriptures, a new impetus was given for the re-examination of this faith. Upon his death and resurrection was born a new community which produced in response to faith further documentary testimony to this same faith. Thus, Bible and Church are correlatives, for in each we find witness to the same faith.

But in thus introducing “Church” it is necessary to assert that the Bible is not only the Book of Faith, but it is also the Book of History as well. And in so far as it is a history, it is a particular kind of history. On one level it presents the history of the whole world from the perspective of faith, but primarily it is the history of particular people during particular periods of time in particular situations and places. In so far as it is this kind of history, it was written for a particular reason. The Bible tells the story of men only in so far as they are in relationship to God. The most important figure in the Bible is not Moses, nor David, nor one of the prophets, nor Paul, nor John, nor one of the disciples, nor even Jesus himself; but rather it is He who pervades the whole of the Bible, namely, the Living God. The Bible is the history of one Church—in two communities—dedicated to one God. The Bible is the history of the “acts of God.”

This particularity of history does not deny nor negate the general historical character of the Bible. Inadvertently, the Biblical writers related these “acts of God” in historical contexts. Thus we find a cultural record spanning over a millenium of historical activity. And this history includes nearly all the possible concrete events that could befall both men and nations. Yet the historicity of these events is always subservient to the theme which runs through the whole of the Bible—that the God of Israel acts in history in just such events. The Word of God is constantly manifested and tabernacled with men. To the Biblical writers history belonged to God—to the God who enters into human history. Thus the message of the Bible is in the form of a history, for historical events become the source and loci of all faith and hope. The clue to our understanding of authority must therefore be sought in terms of this kind of understanding of God, for from the Biblical perspective it is only God who “has the right to command or to act.”

Having thus seen the historical character of the Bible, we must examine the relationship of history and inspiration that we might move

toward our goal of determining how the Bible can be "authority" for today. The books which constitute the Bible were written by men, yet men who asserted "Thus says the Lord." But if we claim "inspiration" in any mechanical sense for the written words, then these authors were mere automatons—"typewriters," as it were, responding to some "supernatural" touch. From an external view, perhaps this would appear to be the case. But looking at the words themselves, we see that they are concerned with a God who works through the channels of natural and historical processes. And what about the men of whom these words record lives and utterances? Are they mere "loudspeakers" for a "superhuman" voice? When we look at the courageous prophets, at the zealous apostles, and even at the Teacher himself, we see real men speaking from the depths of their personal experiences. These men were inspired—inspired to speak out of their historical background to the historical situation that confronted them—but inspiration applies therefore to men and not to written words, men living "in the world" who are not "of the world." The Bible is a history of this inspiration written by men similarly inspired.

If then we claim that the Bible is the product of men—to be sure, inspired men, yet ordinary mortals such as we are—how can we assert that there is a unity underlying their historically time-conditioned documents? More specifically how can we say there is a unity of the Old Testament and the New Testament? And how is this related to us?

It has been our assertion earlier in this paper that the Bible is unified by the faith which provides its structure—the faith affirmed in both Testaments that the same God offers the same salvation to all men by the action of His Elect through the medium of human history of which He is Lord. On the one hand, then, the Bible records the story of God's relation to particular people at particular times and places in history. On the other hand, the Bible is the presentation in faith to us here and now of His History, of the reconciling impact which He makes upon human history, such that we having been encountered by Him might become a part of it.

Having made that claim, we can now indicate what is meant by "the authority of the Bible for the mid-twentieth century." The Bible is authoritative *only* in so far as we affirm that we too stand under the grace and judgment which constitutes His historical activity. Faith provides the structure which gives unity to the Bible. But faith is the work of His Holy Spirit, just as the Bible is the product of men thus inspired. The Holy Spirit is the power of God conceived in relation to explicit human needs. This activity tends to be known and experienced in terms defined and restricted by the purview imposed by these practical purposes. But it also tends to be distorted or fragmented by the way the

human situation attempts to bend God to the purposes and perspectives of men.

Therefore, there is no intellectual structure which communicates once and for all the meaning of the faith which has been, and is being, historically revealed. The Bible is our authority in so far as we affirm that to which the Bible gives affirmation, and live in the faith subject to the judgment of the Biblical faith. For there to be an authority of the Bible our faith must be the Biblical faith, operating across history in a dialectical relation. The authority for the faith, finally then, is the faith itself.

“Behold, he whose soul is not upright in him shall fail,  
But the righteous shall live by his faith.” (Hab. 2:4)

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast.” (Eph. 2:8, 9)

## Faith From the Outside and Inside

A SERMON SYNOPSIS

*J. Robert Moffett, Alliance, Ohio*

When I attended the University of Chicago I lived across the street from Stagg Field, which we looked upon as a monument to the former athletic power of the university. The field was seldom used and the bleachers never used. It seemed a waste to us to have an entire block of the metropolis taken up by an unused structure.

For one year a room in the Disciples' House was occupied by a young Jewish physicist from New Jersey who was at the university working on some project. He was good company and an excellent ping-pong player. We raised our eyebrows only momentarily when he left to go to Tennessee and we vaguely wondered why he would go to some unheard of town in that state.

We later discovered we had no idea about the significance of Stagg Field or the purpose of the young physicist. I was asleep one night a few hundred feet from the first atomic chain reaction which was set off beneath the bleachers of Stagg Field. I never knew it for several years. The empty room next to mine that night belonged to one of the men who set it off. We never knew then what was going on inside the field or the man.

The only time I ever heard Toyohiko Kagawa was when I was in High School and he visited my home town. He was a little man behind the great pulpit, slender, emaciated, sickly looking with high pitched voice, speaking barely intelligible English. When I left all I knew was that I



had heard Kagawa speak. I knew his spiritual power from previous knowledge of him, but he did little to substantiate that opinion. The power of Kagawa was still in what he had done for Christianity in Japan.

Muriel Lester quotes Mahatma Gandhi saying before a great throng, "Physically, I am a weakling. A ten-year-old boy could walk up and push me over with his hand. But when God is my strength, you cannot harm me!"

It is impossible to know the inside by observing the outside—whether a city or a building or a man. But it has been one of the temptations of all organized religion to convince men—sooner or later—that if they put on the "garments of faith" they can protect themselves, externally, from the evil of the world.

### THE GARMENTS OF FAITH

In the times of Jesus the "Garments of Faith" were worn with the impossible correctness of a full dress uniform which makes all who wear it alike and makes them above reproach. But the "garment" does not effect the character of the person. The sacrifices, the feasting and fasting, the formal prayers all made the individual vicariously pure, regardless of his personal life. They nullified all evil acts and purposes, regardless of how base their personal lives might be.

The temple priests, the sadducees and pharisees were not the only advocates of such disciplines. Many of the common people protected the disciplines for it preserved a religion which purified godlessness rather than condemning godlessness! The difference between Jesus' teachings and the religion of the Jews might be said to be that Judaism was concerned with external faith—the "garments"—while Jesus was concerned with getting faith inside the man.

Jesus had no criticism with the belief in Yahweh who, through Moses, established his law and through David established his Kingdom. Jesus had no quarrel with prayer through which God's companionship was sought. Jesus was devout in his worship in the temple and in the synagogues. But Jesus openly opposed any of these being used as "garments of faith" which could be set aside with absolute freedom.

Jesus watched a pharisee kick a crippled beggar from his place on a corner and then properly fold his hands and raise his voice for the incantation of the accepted prayer. Jesus watched the temple police "protecting the faith" by killing a man who criticized the greed of the priests. The "garments" left a man unchanged within.

### THE INNER FAITH

One hundred years after Jesus lived the author of II Peter calls his readers to "set your minds on endorsing by your conduct the fact that God has called and chosen you." He also says that God's greatest and most precious promises are available to us through Jesus, making it pos-

sible for us to escape the inevitable disintegration which the world produces. We must do our best to see that our faith carries with it a real goodness of life. Complacent and unproductive lives cannot be reconciled with the knowledge of the Lord, for knowledge results from faith and it produces self-control. And self-control must be accompanied by endurance which produces, in turn, trust in God, brotherliness and Christian love.

I remember a magazine advertisement many years ago which showed two identical football players crouching on the line ready to move when the signals were called. The caption beneath the picture was "Which one is the dud?" You cannot tell by the wrappings of a candy bar what the candy tastes like any more than you can tell a Christian by his appearances.

Belief in Jesus Christ means accepting the kind of life he lived. This can be accomplished by disciplining our life so that it revolves around the purposes of God. Our outside life cannot escape ultimate reflection of what our inner life contains.

### FEAR AND FAITH

The most tragic problem of life is not poverty or danger or death or solitude, but the paralysis which results from the fear of any one of these. One author points out that probably the fall of Jericho did not result from any mighty act of God, but that after the children of Israel had marched seven times around the city for seven days, finally blowing the ram's horn, Jericho was destroyed by panic within.

Jesus was actually doing no harm to Jewish faith, but the fear of his spiritual power drove weaker men to kill him. Any problem we have today—no matter whom we may blame—is finally within us. The only answer is deep faith!

Now there is nothing more disgusting than the land of perpetual sunshine which misguided amateur psychologists recommend and call religion. They say in effect fears are not real if you refuse to recognize them as such. Fear is real, and evil is real, as are hate and love and redemption. Jesus knew they were real. But he also knew that the power of God was so much more real than these that if He could instill that power in man, man and the world would be transformed.

Faith is not strong until it does battle with evil! A seed never produces a plant until it is first buried in the earth. Hydraulic power is nothing but air which has been confined in a space too small and fights against its confinement. Faith is belief in Jesus Christ which is challenged by meaninglessness and hopelessness and despair, and which emerges from the Christian to destroy all the denials of God it can reach.

Faith is Rev. Harry Wilson sacrificing his ministry in a Virginia church to oppose the legal destruction of public education in his state,

attempting to avoid desegregation. Faith is Kagawa in his illness, rejecting the security of parental home to work with the men and women in the slums of Tokyo. Faith is Murial Lester or Henry Hitt Crane raising their voices against the war-madness of nations to plead for men to commit themselves to peace.

Faith is the power within which makes the outside garment unnecessary. Faith is God shining through the life of a man into the heart of his brother!

## A College Address To Prospective Ministers

Delivered in Stone Chapel, Drury College,  
Springfield, Missouri, Winter, 1956, by

*R. A. Thomas, St. Joseph, Missouri*

All of you here this morning have more or less definite ideas about the Church, the Ministry and religion in general. They are ideas you have picked up in your homes, in the churches you have known and from ministers with whom you have been acquainted. And these ideas will vary greatly depending mostly upon those experiences.

Some of you will think of the Church as an institution that stands for puritanical morality and ideas that are not tenable in this kind of world because that's the only kind of church you ever knew. Others of you will think of the ministry as a profession in which men shamelessly put their egos on display, and make pronouncements about matters which they really know nothing about.

But some of you will have had an experience of religion and the church and its ministry that will indicate something of the richness of its life and the wonderful services it can render. Perhaps you met a pastor-counselor at a time in your life when you needed to talk to a sympathetic and understanding person and you found help and strength in his friendliness and concern, and in his willingness to deal realistically with your problems and the difficult decision you faced without condemnation or preachments.

Or it may be you have listened as some great preacher of the unsearchable riches of God proclaimed a new idea or put an old one in such terms that you were lifted out of the pressures and needs of the moment to consider your life and all life in its deepest aspects. That happened in more than one Chapel service when I was a student in Drury College. And if you have ever had such an experience your life can never be quite the same.

Have you ever considered why it is that anyone becomes a minister?



I suppose there are men who choose this work for ignoble reasons, and those of you who have had some courses in psychology will know that we very often give wrong reasons for what we do—failing to understand the kinds of pressures and drives that seek and demand some outlet. That happens in every area of life and it is bound to happen to some extent, at least, with regard to our choice of vocation.

Those of us in the ministry would be the first to admit that some of us are hypocritical and some of us are ignorant and there is a good deal of ego-satisfaction being sought in church leadership. But we would deny, and history and present experience would support us in the denial, that such is the case with the far greater number of those who are engaged in professional religious work of one kind or another. Educational standards are going up, and mis-fits are being more carefully weeded out, and the basic motivations for those who enter religious work are being given ever more serious consideration.

The fact of the matter is that the preaching in American pulpits is better than it has ever been: it is more down-to-earth; it is more concerned with the real problems men face; it is less interested in another world than it is in this world. The so-called battle between science and religion is over—at least at the higher levels, and the Church is more willing to receive truth from whatever source than formerly. The newer science of psychology has added a new dimension to the pastoral ministry and made it possible for those in positions of leadership to understand better those they lead, as well as to understand themselves better.

People all over the world are more interested in the questions and problems religion has always posed than perhaps ever before. In the Far East there is an amazing revival of Buddhism and Hinduism. In the United States people are flocking to the churches in un-precedented numbers. Personally, I don't think this means that people are any more religious than they ever were, but I do think it means they are searching for values that will give life meaning and purpose; faith that will give it stability.

Basically, a man enters the service of the Church because he has come to some decision about the ultimate values of life. He has decided that people are more important than things—that human personality is precious—that the children of the earth are the children of God. He comes to believe that the nurture and care of persons, so that they are helped into the "good life" where they find dignity and purpose and love, is the supreme end of life.

And in the second place, he enters the service of the Church because he believes this institution, beyond any other, offers the means to that end.

It is not my purpose this morning to argue whether or not the Church can do that. Anyone who knows anything about history knows that its career is checkered. My own position is that of a free-church protestant, and I am not interested in authoritarian churches, but rather in the development of free congregations of free spirit, where the seeking of truth and the sharing of experience is intimate and uncontrolled by overhead authority.

I *am* interested in pursuing a little farther this problem of value, since it is so central to the crisis of our time. We are part of a culture that has put the mark of value on material things, and we have sought the development of the material life to such an extent that we have become the most productive people on the face of the earth. We have so well learned to use the materials of the universe and the forces that control it that we now know, or are on the verge of discovering, how to destroy our planet—or if not that, at least the most of the life on it.

The real question of our time is not whether we can produce enough goods and things so that men everywhere can enjoy the fruits of inventive genius; the real question is whether men are good enough, or can become good enough, to do what we have the ability to do. Our severest problems are in the field of human relations, and that means they are in the realm of value.

An interesting thing has been going on here at Drury College for a rather long time, now. The department of religion is "a department of religion and philosophy." That has partly been a matter of convenience and economy, and no doubt the president and the dean would rather have two departments as is the case in most universities. But last week I heard the chairman of the department of religion and philosophy at the University of Houston say what I have long believed, that they belong together and that they ought not be separated. Why? Because philosophy has never been able to come up with a satisfactory solution of the problem of value, though "axiology" is a part of its discipline.

It is *religion* that has an answer to this question, and it will always be religion, because fundamentally the source of value is God. Great religion says that God is the Creator of the universe, the author of life, and that men find their supreme satisfaction and achieve their ultimate end as they seek to serve Him. The Christian religion says that serving the needs of men is serving Him.

And so the ministers of Christ have gone to the ends of the earth, seeking out the lowliest and most needy of the children of God to tell them of their worth and to help them find their places. Some of these ministers have been great minds and spirits like Albert Schweitzer, who had established a reputation in theology, music, and medicine, only to turn to the most primitive place he knew in the world to do what he

could to help. But most of them have been little-known and little-sung. They have labored in the far places of the earth, and in village and hamlet across this land, sometimes misunderstood, often criticized, more often tolerated.

In the early years of the nation's history they carried culture and learning as the frontier moved westward, establishing colleges one after another. Most of those institutions failed to live very long, but all of them served some purpose and some of them are still flourishing, like this one.

The debt the nation owes to those pioneer religious leaders can scarcely be over-stated, and all of us are the inheritors of their zeal and learning, their love of freedom, their sense of mission.

Drury has played its part in educating men and women to take their places in a variety of vocations, and not the least in the field of religious service. It has helped to produce doctors and lawyers, teachers and engineers; it has tried to create an atmosphere of integrity and freedom in which young people could choose their place of service—for service has been its motto and watchword. It has sent its sons and daughters across the world to find their places of work, and they labor far and near in the service of "Christ and humanity."

It has had a high view of the ministry and has sought to provide the sort of well-rounded general education that will give its ministerial students the only kind of background suitable for today's ministry. It has never been sectarian in spirit, but has emphasized those principles of Biblical scholarship and religious understanding that are the common ground of the Christian faith. It has urged its students preparing for religious work to live normally and to seek understanding of their fellows. It has sent them to seminaries and divinity schools all over the land as well prepared to continue their studies successfully as those from any undergraduate school in the country, and better prepared than most.

The ministry is a "high calling" as Perry Gresham has written in a recent book, and no man can enter it wholeheartedly nor stay in it successfully without a deep personal commitment to God and a rare understanding of the needs of men. Its demands are heavy; its work never-ending; its opportunities for service unlimited. The church needs better minds and freer spirits and more dedicated leadership than it has ever had if it is to meet the marvelous possibilities now laid at its door.

Drury College, through its professors and its student body, ought to, and can, produce some of that leadership. It is in a rare and wonderful position to pursue the search for truth; to cultivate the disciplines of scholarship; and to create the atmosphere in which the "good life" is realized.



# A Pastoral Letter To The Blacksburg Christian Church, Blacksburg, Virginia January 5, 1956

Dear Christian Friends:

As a Christian minister, and particularly as your minister, I feel that I must write this letter, yet I hardly know how since there is so much I would like to say. One reason that I have waited so long is that I have wanted to get as much information as possible, but the information just doesn't seem to be forthcoming.

This Monday's decision on the part of the people of Virginia is of such importance either way that I feel I must speak out on this issue. I cannot, nor will I, tell you how to vote; however, I do ask you to consider your vote very carefully and *prayerfully* and, above all, be sure it is in line with your Christian convictions and not just your prejudices.

Let me state my own personal convictions as your minister. You will remember, perhaps, that when this Gray Commission was first set up by Governor Stanley, I stated from the pulpit that I was ashamed of my state—ashamed because the commission was not instructed to study the problem but specifically directed to see how our state could legally circumvent the unanimous decision of the highest court in our land, established to give just hearing to all cases dealing with the constitutional rights of the people and to render decisions to protect these rights.

This was done in our case, and it was argued by none other than Attorney-General J. Lindsay Almond. *We lost*, even after the members of the court took a second session of hearings before making their decision. And remember, *this decision was unanimous*—even in the face of a previous decision years ago to the contrary. Now it seems to me that we are acting like a spoiled child who says, "All right, if I can't have my way, I'm going to take my toys and go home."

I am not blind to the great problems this court decision has raised in our state and others (neither was the court, and it made allowances for them); but these facts are evident: one—that other states and areas with similar problems are working to comply with this ruling, (*and more successfully than our pro-segregationist newspapers would have us believe*); no effort has been made to see how Virginia *can* comply with the ruling (Governor Stanley's original plan to have a biracial commission to study it was abolished I am told); and three—*we are now asked*

*to amend our state constitution so that we can use public tax money to pay for private school education for parents who do not want their children going to school with Negroes; and this by means of a rush method without any adequate answers as to how we can finance it or even exactly what the plans are!*

Not one of us can foresee all the problems that such a decision will raise. Now are you willing to risk these consequences simply on the grounds that Negroes have won their *legal* right not to be barred from a school *because of race alone IF* they desire to attend it?

I may be mistaken in my interpretation, but I have not seen where the Supreme Court has said that *all schools must be integrated!* But it has said that *no school must be segregated!* There is a difference here. The decision is that no child can be *barred* from a school because of race. This certainly does not mean that Negroes are going to demand entrance to every school in our state.

The State Referendum "Information" Center is making great use of President Darden's stand; but remember that even he has said that "eventual integration in Virginia's schools cannot be prevented."

What else is there to do? First and foremost—we can make a positive approach to the solution of this problem instead of the negative one such as this; second—if we can go through all this procedure to make such sweeping changes as are proposed, why can we not let individual counties handle the problem? Or third—surely there must be some way to integrate gradually which will be acceptable to the Negroes—or have they been asked? The Gray Commission does allow any community that wishes to integrate to do so, but must the state constitution be amended, *with all its attendant possibilities of abuse*, to allow for the decision of a minority of families who will absolutely refuse to have their children educated rather than to send them to school in which Negroes are in attendance? And must you and I (*and the Negroes*) pay for their education in private schools for this reason?

My personal convictions are that this decision by the Gray Commission is not in accord with Christian principles; that the intent is to continue a pattern of segregation which is crumbling everywhere; that we shall do irreparable damage to our democratic principles in the eyes of our neighbors overseas; that this "legal" method of circumventing the decision of the Supreme Court is not to be commended; and that it will not be financially feasible.

Here is a case which really tests our Christian teaching. Please vote in accordance with your most conscientious considerations.

Your minister,  
Robert T. Wilkenson

# The Willett Library in 1955-56

*R. E. Starkey, Chicago, Illinois*

1955-56 saw expansion in the Herbert L. Willett Library. Through new purchases and gifts a number of new books have been added to the library this past year. This is a brief report of these additions.

This year the Library was fortunate to receive a major contribution through the gift of his library from Charles Clayton Morrison. Comprising about 1,270 volumes, a large number of subjects are covered. Major items are books on the peace movement, following World War I, works dealing with Christian unity as well as theology, hymnology, church history and allied subjects. This collection has been of immense value in building up not only the basic materials, but in providing many items of additional interest.

This spring a fund was started and books purchased by way of a memorial to the late Charlie Brown, "54," who was killed in an automobile accident. Funds from this memorial have been used to purchase works in the field of sociology of religion and social ethics, a major interest of Charlie's.

With the increase in the number of volumes it was necessary to increase and develop stack space in what was formerly the "ping-pong" room. Permanent shelving has been installed giving us needed space for expansion. A new card catalogue was purchased and the creating of a shelf list was begun.

Other projects in relation to the library include the granting of accession numbers to all books, revamping of the numerical index, replacing of all manuscript file cards and the creation of a audio-visual section to care for film-strips, photo-cards and micro-films.

It is the policy of the Library to attempt to collect and maintain basic texts and resource materials for the core courses as well as to keep a significant collection of Disciple related materials and work on Christian unity.

While much has been begun in this past year there remains a sizable amount of basic materials which are needed. We hope to continually increase the adequacy of the collection to meet the needs of the students of the House.



# The Charlie J. Brown Memorial Collection

C. C. Smith, Chicago, Illinois

Charlie J. Brown, March 13, 1929—January 12, 1956

The loss which the sudden and tragic death of a young but beloved "Comrade of the House" wreaks in our midst is by no means overcome by a mere memorial. As Howard Kester stated at the interment in Black Mountain, North Carolina, Jan. 15, 1956: "These things come hard to us mortal men, and we can neither understand nor comprehend them." Nevertheless, it is true that in response to such events we do seek means, however inadequate, to express our understanding not only of the Ultimate Meaning of life, but particularly of the meaning and dedication of that human life which is Charlie J. Brown.

As Kester has more elegantly said for us, we do "... know how magnificently Charlie Brown filled full ... the brief years of his sojourn amongst us. Filled them full with ...

... a consuming desire to know the truth, no matter what that knowledge cost, in the firm faith that truth and truth alone sets men free.

... a burning zeal to enable men to erase the barriers of race and clan and creed with which our world is cursed and broken.

... a deep concern to make this church at Bee Tree, and every church on every hill and in every valley, a church of the living God."

It is in response to such an understanding of Charlie Brown that there has come to the library a spontaneous gift of volumes which may in some measure serve as a perennial reminder to the students who shall yet pass through these portals of that kind of spirit which imbued Charlie and which the Disciples House seeks to enrich.

Charlie was well aware of the judgment of God which stands over against every man and every social institution including the Church. The God which he sought to serve, throughout his life and even in his death, cannot be identified with any personal or social structure. It was his concern to more fully be aware of the nature of those structures that provided the impetus for his study and led him to seek personal experiences at Bee Tree Church in the mountains of western North Carolina. And the fruit of his study and experience was the prophetic proclamation of the judgment of the God whom he sought to serve. It is with reference to this aspect of his ministry that one portion of the collection has been made, the following volumes being included:

E. W. Burgess & H. J. Locke, *The Family*

M. Weber, *Essays in Sociology*

W. James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*  
 R. & H. Lynd, *Middletown*  
 E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*  
 H. Odium, *The Way of the South*  
 C. H. Cooley, *Social Organization*  
 G. van der Lieuw, *Religion in Essence and Meaning*  
 C. J. Neusse & T. J. Harte, *The Sociology of the Parish*  
 W. C. Hallenbeck, *American Urban Communities*  
 Loomis & Begle, *Rural Social Systems*  
 E. de S. Brunner & W. C. Hallenbeck, *American Society: Urban and Rural Patterns*  
 M. H. Leiffer, *The Effective City Church*  
 J. N. Fichter, *Social Relations in the Urban Parish*  
 G. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*  
 K. Davis, *Modern American Society*  
 J. Wach, *Types of Religious Experience*  
 T. Parsons, *Essays in Sociological Theory*

But to be true to Charlie's integrity we must also say that at times he allowed his understanding of the judgment of God to overshadow that grace of God by which the Church throughout all ages has lived. In an attempt therefore to more adequately convey the full dimensions of the Church there has been included in the collection that series of volumes which presents the sources for our understanding of the development of the Church in its formative years. These volumes are also dedicated to the spirit of inquiry which told Charlie Brown that all things were not yet complete even in his own life.

*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 10 volumes, American reprint edition

That Charlie possessed these dimensions makes even more cutting the wound which we have suffered by his loss. For his life, like our lives, rests finally in the hands of God, whose fullness we now see only in part, but he sees face to face.

## In This Summer's Reading Satchel

As a follow-up to my little article on summer reading, I hereby indicate some titles that are already in the 1956 summer list, for which my appetite is whetted, and which add to the lure of forthcoming vacation days.

Top of the list, by all odds is Volume I, "The Birth of Britain" in Winston Churchill's *History of the English Speaking Peoples*. I am reading this work, not because it is a wonderful review of our history—which

it is—but because it provides superb insights into the mind of one of the greatest history-making figures of my own lifetime. Winston Churchill has had a decisive influence upon us all. Much of his “History” was written prior to 1939. What is just now published was the background against which Churchill was working when he became England’s prime minister. Few of the great figures of history have revealed to the men of their own age as much of themselves as Churchill has done through his writings. He has displayed an amazing social responsibility. Whether you agree with him or not, you have to admit that he has not failed to provide his times with real resources for the understanding of his own mind and attitudes. I am reading Churchill because it will greatly increase my own understanding of the immediate past—and I have peeked just enough to discover that the book is much more exciting than all the introductions to it have been, including the extensive quotations which appeared in *Life* magazine.

A look back needs to be balanced by a look forward. Hence, *The Challenge of Man’s Future* by Harrison Brown (Compass Books, \$1.25) goes into the list. Dr. Brown did his study for this book while he was associated with the Institute for Nuclear Studies at the University of Chicago. While nuclear physics is Dr. Brown’s special area, he is a scientist of tremendous scope of knowledge with unusual powers of analysis and generalization. He believes that we in the United States are in a position of tremendous responsibility regarding the destiny of all mankind. His book reviews the potentials of our globe for food, energy, and material. These potentials are discussed against the background of population. Here is an honest attempt to get a grand strategy for mankind. I know it deserves to be read.

Half my life has been lived in Chicago, and all of these years have centered on 57th St. At the east end of the street, half a mile from Disciples House, there still stands a row of stores built in connection with the 1893 World’s Fair. In the period from 1910 to 1920 these stores housed a “literary colony.” It was made up of young men who did not, at the time, realize they were to become the most forceful literary influence of the twentieth century. They were young men out of the mid-West who came into its great, burgeoning metropolis. Here their message was hammered out—and from here they went forth into all the world with a style and a view of life which blossomed in the 1920’s and became the chief literary expression of America. Masters, Anderson, Sandburg, Hemingway—these with forerunners and followers, are the chief characters in *The Chicago Renaissance in American Letters* by Bernard Duffey (The Michigan State University Press, 1956—paper cover).

W. B. Blakemore



# THE SCROLL

The Journal of the Campbell Institute

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F. E. Davison

## CHRISTIAN UNITY AND DISCIPLES OF CHRIST: A REVIEW

Irvin E. Lunger

# Our Contributors

The authors of two of this issue's articles deserve a special note. Daniel L. Eckert is a retired minister of the American Baptist Convention, who, as he told us, ". . . served one term as a foreign missionary, as a boy was a 'visitor' at the First World's Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, 1910, was a reporter for the local secular press at Evanston, had three years of post-graduate work in comparative religions at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, and, some ten or fifteen years ago, began to re-examine his faith and the manner in which that faith finds expression currently, in the light of the Gospel". We are happy to welcome him to the Scroll, believing that our readers will find his essay quite thought provoking as they prepare for this year's Des Moines Assembly.

Thomas L. Hanna is a Disciple student working in the field of Christian theology under the Federated Theological Faculty. During the current academic year, 1956-1957, he is on fellowship at the University of Mainz, Germany, writing his doctoral dissertation. The article here printed constitutes the statement written for the oral part of his field examination. We present it as an interesting illustration of the existentialist position in contemporary theology.

The other authors are already known to our readers. J. J. Van Boskirk is the Executive Secretary of the Chicago Disciples Union. George Earle Owen is now in charge of missionary recruitment and education for the United Christian Missionary Society, following significant terms of missionary service in Argentina and the Philippines. Clyde C. Smith, a graduate student working in the field of Old Testament under the Federated Theological Faculty, is the recently appointed Executive Assistant to the Dean of the Disciples Divinity House. F. E. Davison needs no further introduction to our readers, who will surely enjoy this brief selection from his well-known pen. Irvin E. Lunger, now Academic Dean at Transylvania College, presents us with a comprehensive review of a most significant book to bring to a well-rounded close this issue of *The Scroll*.

We should not have failed to give credit in the last issue of *The Scroll* for the article about Dr. W. E. Garrison by Miss Marie Moore to the *Houston Post* in which the article originally appeared and by whose permission it was republished.

# The International Convention As CHURCH

*Daniel L. Eckert, Danville, Illinois*

An Open Letter to W. B. Blakemore:

Over a year ago I addressed you a letter relative to something I had read from your pen about the lack of a "theology" for the International Convention of Disciples of Christ. I am still thinking about it, and would be pleased to have my own thinking subjected to the criticism of a wider circle among the Disciples.

I came away from Evanston with what I have since regarded as the "Evanston experience". I do not believe I was alone in this experience; many shared it. I was writing about this to a correspondent of mine in England, and in reply he agreed that there was "ecclesiastical reality" at Evanston. He did not, however, attempt to define that "ecclesiastical reality".

My own interpretation was this: It was a shared experience of God in Christ present in the Spirit. My mind ran back through the centuries to that judgment, "Where Christ is, there is the Church". Thinking about it, I reached the conclusion that the *Church* was at Evanston, regardless of the fact that the WCC had definitely gone on record that it was not "a" nor "the" Church, but a Council of churches. This led me to distinguish between the *Church* as *constituted* by God in Christ through the Spirit, and the church as *instituted* by men and women of faith, beginning at Jerusalem at Pentecost. That is to say the Church is diphysite, Divine and human; as constituted by the Spirit it is *Church*; as instituted by mankind it is church. The *institution* of the church in history begins immediately after the *constitution* of the *Church*, as indicated in Acts 2:42,, where it is said, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." Acts 6:1 advances the institutionalization of the church with the appointment of the seven deacons. All that we know in history as the church is the expansion of this institutionalization in variety and development—what we know as doctrine, liturgy, sacraments, orders, discipline, life, and work.

The relationship between the *Church*, as constituted by the Spirit, and the church, as instituted by men and women of faith and obedience, is determined by the freedom with which both the Divine and the human play their parts. Neither is determinative of the other; both operate, so to speak, in accordance with their own nature as free, the latter by the will of the former. The intimacy of the relationship between the



*Church* and the church depends upon the latter conforming with the former. That is why it is true to say, "Where Christ is, there is the Church", and not always true to say, "Where the church is, there is Christ". That is to say, the *Church* as constituted by the Spirit is not to be equated with the church as instituted by men and women in their response of faith to grace. The latter is not necessarily in conformity to the former although there is no reason, except human limitations, why the latter should not be the equivalent of the former.

I am an American Baptist. We met at Seattle one June. One of our Baptist editors remarked that the "church" was not present at Seattle, only delegates of churches. (He did not distinguish as I am between the *Church* as constituted by the Spirit, and the church as instituted by men and women of faith and obedience.) My reaction to his editorial was that if the *Church* was not at Seattle, Christ was not there; if Christ was at Seattle, the *Church* was there. That is to say, wherever two or three, be they individuals or thousands, are met in His name, He is in the midst, and that Presence constitutes the *Church*.

Which is to say, our institutional delimitations are not significant for the Lord of the Church in any absolute way. The *Church* as God in Christ through the Spirit constitutes it is more fluid than the concreteness of our denominational organizational boundaries and barriers.

This leads me to say that the *Church* is at your International Conventions, but not as church, since your communion is congregationally organized as ours is.

Paul's doctrine of the Church as the body of Christ has led some communions such as Greeks, etc., to deny that repentance may be predicated of the church, because sin may not be predicated of the church, since it is the body of Christ, which position seems to contradict human Christian experience. However, Dr. Antoine Kartachoff, in *The Ecumenical Review* of October, 1955, pages 32-33, in a sense rebuked Archbishop Michael and the other Greek delegates to Evanston, by calling attention to the diphysite character of the church. But we are not bound by the organic symbols of the *Church* or the church, because Jesus is recorded as having used a social symbol of the *Church*—namely, that of Shepherd and sheep-folds-flock, which allows for the wandering and the sin which has characterized the church and her members and leaders through the centuries.

It is for this reason that one can distinguish between the *Church* as constituted by the Spirit, by his Presence, and the church as instituted by men and women of faith and obedience, who are at the same time men and women of disobedience and of sin.

It would seem true to say that the *Church* was John Huss, in his individual faith and witness at the stake, and not the church which condemned him.

I do not know whether this makes sense to you, but it satisfies my mind as to the ecclesiastical realities of conventions and assemblies and so on, of whatever origin, which meet in the name of the Lord to know and to do his will. It might well be that the *Church* is not at an International Convention of the Disciples of Christ: God forbid! It may be that the church, as congregation, is not at an International Convention, but only the representatives of congregations. But what I am pointing out is that this institutional arrangement by which the Disciples come together and do their work, nationally and internationally, is not determinative of the *Church*. The *Church* must be at your International Conventions if Christ is there. If the church is not there, then, it is the business of the churches to make the necessary adjustment of their polity to conform with and express the ecclesiastical reality which is the *Church*. If there is any lack of agreement on the part of the latter to express and to be the former, then, there is no doubt where the blame lies.

As I see it, through the eyes of an American Baptist, the member churches of which the associations, state and national conventions, and world alliance are composed, organized as they are to do together many Christian enterprises which the individual churches cannot do in separation, or think they cannot, with their societies, commissions, committees, secretaries, etc., are an institution of ecclesiastical reality, although not necessarily, but only potentially, equivalent to the *Church* as constituted by the Spirit. Together they constitute what I regard as a functional segment of the church universal, which if it were what it should be, would be the equivalent of the *Church Universal* as constituted by God in Christ through the Spirit.

One needed amendment of the present ecclesiastical disparateness is the abandoning by the churches as communions, closed religious groups, of all barriers to fellowship irrespective of denominational lines and boundaries, as for example, the recent Anglican refusal to have religious fellowship with the clergy of the Church of South India, if, while in England, this clergy had fellowship with churches with whom the Church of South India was in fellowship in South India, but with whom the Church of England was not in fellowship in England—i.e., Presbyterians, Congregationalists, or Methodists. Primarily it is the denial of universal fellowship of worship and sacrament which makes the church, as denominationally constituted, incapable of being the *Church*, since Christ is not divided. Likewise, if the congregations of Disciples and Baptists, which they insist must be local only, will permit their delegates, when in Convention, to be representatives, that is, to be the local church repre-

sentatively in assembly with other local churches, and if this progressive loosening of denominational and congregational lines as to fellowship and worship is extended to apply interdenominationally, then it would not be impossible for the church to become the *Church*.

There ought to be no reluctance on the part of congregations to convert their delegates into representatives, since it is customary for the local congregations to act in representatives, when it comes to many activities of the local congregations. The "official" eldership or diaconate of a local church but epitomizes that of the congregation, as Dr. Eduard Schweizer of Zurich, so beautifully points out in the April, 1956, issue of *The Ecumenical Review*, pages 254ff.

As I see it, both Baptists and Disciples must change their thinking about their local churches as they are represented by delegates in associational, state or national conventions, or international or interdenominational assemblies, when through them they set up and support societies, etc., according to the needs of the hour, and regard their delegates as representatives, whatever the restrictions the local congregations may place upon them. It must be obvious that one restriction lies outside their prerogative or power, and should also lie outside their will and wish, that, when assembled in such association, convention, or assembly, they should deny to their representatives so assembled the possibility that God in Christ through the Spirit will not also be present! Do the representatives leave Christ back home in the local congregations? Do the local congregations desire the absence of the Presence from their associations, conventions, and interdenominational assemblies? Moreover, if Christ is to be in such assemblies, has he also arranged to leave the *Church* out of the picture? Is Christ present in history apart from the *Church*?

If Baptists and Disciples, and many others, change their thinking about the nature of their conventions and assemblies, the gap between the local congregation, both as church and as *Church*, and the associations and conventions, as church and as *Church*, will be bridged. (The hub of the difficulty is in our understanding, not in the reality.) No longer will ecclesiologists and theologians be required to hold that the Church is not present in associations, conventions, and assemblies, and societies, boards, and so on. If the *Church* is not at such associations, conventions, assemblies—denominational or pan-denominational, then Christ is not there! The *Church* is wherever Christ is, wherever men and women of faith and obedience are together to know and to do his will, whether representively, or otherwise. It should be kept in mind that the representative is a Christian in his individuality, as a member of a local congregation, and is therefore capable of the Presence of the Lord of the



*Church* in his individual capacity as a Christian, as well as in his representative capacity as the delegate of a local congregation in an association, convention, or international and pan-denominational assembly.

# The Problem of the Inner City Church

*J. J. Van Boskirk, Chicago, Illinois*

## URBANISM—A NEW PROBLEM FOR CHURCHES

Cities have been with us since the beginning of civilization. They have set the moral, cultural, and intellectual tone for their hinterlands. However, they have been taking on a vastly greater role in our civilization during the last 150 years. As technological improvements have enabled fewer farmers to provide greater surpluses, more and more sons of the soil have moved to the cities and are absorbed in commerce and industry. Within this generation (1917 was the year) America passed from a predominantly rural to urban nation.

The trend goes on unabated until 1954 it was estimated that only 36% of the population is left in what is called rural areas. The whole character of farming is undergoing a revolution. Formerly it was the occupation and way of life of families. Increasingly it is big business in which a man cannot participate unless he has thousands of dollars for capital investment in land and power machinery. Government is not able to find adequate storage facilities for the overproduction that regularly results even though the farmers are paid to limit their productivity. The fact that this condition is providing the election issue this year pales into insignificance before the far more basic truth that it is part of a fast-moving revolution.

It took hundreds of years fraught with great social upheaval for man to make the relatively simple adjustment from nomadic to settled existence on a farm. Modern man is forced to make an infinitely more radical adjustment within a few generations. A great sociologist has said that the greatest crisis man has been called upon to face since he crawled out of the caves is his walking into the caverns of city streets.

Naturally, all of man's institutions share in this turmoil. The church has been backward in locating, defining and attempting to meet the problem thus thrust upon it.

## THE STRUCTURE OF THE CITY

Park and Burgess of the University of Chicago first demonstrated the theory that cities tend to develop in concentric rings from the center out. As the original owners of the homes near the center of the city pass on, their sons move farther out. The homes they leave are divided and sub-

divided to provide housing for the laborers who are imported to fulfill the needs of industry. With the passage of generations new rings are added at the periphery while the inner circles are increasingly marked by all the ills of life: over crowding, crime, delinquency, disease and insanity.

Cities have churches related to each of these circles of growth which may be roughly characterized as:

1. The downtown area (the crossroads)
2. The substandard area adjacent to the business district but not in it
3. The long established, "conservation" neighborhood
4. The suburb, old and new
5. The growing fringe

### DESCRIPTION OF THE INNER CITY

For purposes of this study we are concerned only with the first two categories; the downtown area and the surrounding deteriorated zone. Churches in these categories may be discussed under the general heading of "inner city churches", yet there are important differences that should be noted at the outset.

The down-town church, as contrasted with other inner city churches, has several distinct advantages. Since all transportation funnels into the down-town area the church located there has a ready made asset. Psychologically the down-town church has an advantage since the business and social interests of people bring them near it from all parts of the city. Many business men, for instance, tend to prefer a down-town church since it brings them in contact with other business men. The down-town church shares the advantages of the up-grading which comes to business sections in progressive cities. It has the opportunity to present its message in the center of the city's life. Membership is drawn from all sections of the city.

Life is not so rosy for the church in the zone of transition surrounding the business district. Such a church may have been called a "boulevard church" at some time or another, and the forces of disintegration did not strike it as soon as the down-town church, yet sooner or later it inherits the plight of the inner city church. While it may boast that its members come from all over the city, it is most likely that it draws predominantly from the side on which it is located. Although it enjoys the prominence that goes with being on a heavily travelled artery, only a segment of the city's population will tend to pass it on other business. There is likely to be a bus line on the street, unlike the down-town area where all lines converge. While such a church is not struck by deterioration as soon as the down-town church, it is much less likely to share in a general paint-up, fix-up campaign.

Neither type of church has much to be happy about as the city grows larger and larger. The down-town area has attractions such as shopping facilities, theatres, cafes, bright lights, etc., but lovely homes are not among them. Railroad tracks, warehouses, wholesale markets, light and heavy industry, do not make for gracious living. Residential sections in the inner city are not residential in the sense understood by small town or suburban dwellers. There are the rooming houses where single men and women prepare their frugal meals over gas jets or electric hot-plates. There are flats and apartment buildings illegally converted to contain two or three families where one lived in happier days. Others have not been converted but rechristened, "one room apartments", with each of the larger rooms containing a family, all sharing the kitchen and bath room.

Not far away is "skid-row" with its cheap honky-tonks, girlie shows, flop houses, gambling joints, and houses of prostitution, gathering places for thugs, homosexuals, drug addicts, and the human derelicts who seek the anonymity of such places.

Who are the people who live here? They are the laborers who have recently come from Europe, from Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Mexico and from the farms or from the deep South. They, like the waves of immigrants before them, are coming in response to the ever increasing needs of our growing industrial economy for laborers.

Some of them are ambitious and young with the controlling ambition to move up on the social and economic scale and to move out into the attractive suburbs. Some of them have come "to make their stake" and then go back to their native homes. Among them are the old, the divorced, the widowed, the physically handicapped. Here are found the ones who take the jobs no one else will have. Here are the alcoholic, the poverty-stricken and the insane.

These are the people who live within walking distance of the inner city church.

#### EFFECT OF CHANGING COMMUNITY UPON THE CHURCH

When the inner city church was built it was a down-town church in a small town or situated in a pleasant community in the residential section. However, as the church begins to be engulfed by business, commercial or industrial developments its problems mount. Physically it encounters the fact that there is not sufficient land for parking—a serious defect in an automobile propelled age. Further it finds that land which even a decade ago could have been purchased for parking was passed up because the church fathers did not see the need. Now the cost is prohibitive. For the same reason the church finds it impossible to purchase land to make needed expansion.



It feels the pinch particularly in the fact that the potential new members live at such great distance from the church. In all likelihood the founders of the church were middle class Americans including business and professional men as well as skilled and unskilled laborers. Disciples who move into the city are not likely to settle near the church unless they are unskilled laborers. Many forces militate against even loyal Disciples making the effort to travel a distance of more than a mile to church.

1. Distance. If the father works on Sunday using the family car, or if he is not interested in the church and resents his wife going alone, distance can be a serious deterring problem. Public transportation is a partial answer, but attempting to use it in bad weather accompanied by small children puts denominational loyalty to a stern test. Of course many come to church this way, but many more use it for an excuse for not coming.

2. Friends of the children. Children like to go to church school with their friends. If they travel more than a mile to an inner city church they find themselves mingling with children from many other school districts whom they do not know. School rivalries can wreck youth fellowships.

3. The value of attending church in one's own community. Dr. S. C. Kincheloe has said that the devil could not have devised a more destructive plan than to have people live in one community, work in another and go to church in still another. Many people break with the down-town church or never join it because they feel that they have primary responsibility to the church in their own community regardless of denomination. In some cases the shift to the neighborhood church grows out of factors 1 and 2, with the parents salving their denominational conscience by saying that they will let "Johnny" attend the nearby church until he is old enough to be baptized (or confirmed) and then they will all "get started" down at "First Church". When Johnny reaches that age, however, he has been indoctrinated in a different point of view, has his circle of friends, and is harder than ever to integrate into First Church.

It should go without saying that the natural indolence of the human spirit and weakening denominational loyalties have more to do with this shift than the idealistic desire to serve one's own community.

#### WHO ARE THE MEMBERS AND WHY DO THEY COME?

The members tend to be much the same kind of people who established the church. Occasionally they may have been up-graded socially and economically, but usually the change is in the other direction. They come to the church for a number of reasons:

1. Loyalty to the past. There are those "old timers" whose fathers were active in the church who continue to support it even at great per-

sonal inconvenience. As the church location begins to be recognized as a problem, there is reluctance to leave the church in difficulty.

2. Loyalty to a denominational point of view. Among the members of the denomination that move to the city there are those sufficiently loyal to travel the distances necessary to reach their church. These are the people who have come from homes deeply committed to a certain point of view and who have spent all their lives in one type of church. Those who have had experiences in churches of other denominations will be more likely to settle in a church nearer home.

3. Those who respond to the evangelistic outreach of the church because of prestige factors, the personality of the minister, involvement in the choir or other face to face groups, etc.

### WHY DOESN'T THE CHURCH EVANGELIZE THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN THE COMMUNITY?

Any inner city church, of course, does evangelize the community about it to a greater or less extent. However, there are limits to its ability to do so.

The first factor is the fact that the people are not likely to feel at home in the worship of the church. "First Church" (or "Crestline Boulevard") during the days of its ascending power had become sophisticated, and even in its declining days its modified Akron architecture speaks of wealth. Its minister has a BD degree from a respectable seminary and speaks in polished accents of abstractions which some of his congregation pretend to understand. His predecessor wore a frock coat and striped trousers in the approved style of 1903, but he wears a robe. The choir director would faint at the thought of singing "There is Power in the Blood" and is assiduously trying to teach the choir the chorales which Bach wrote for congregational singing.

But the former sharecropper who was a deacon in the Red Gap Christian Church and who is now in the city working in the stock yards finds all this unfamiliar and unpalatable, so he is lost to the church.

A second difficulty is the fact that the man from the community finds it hard to exercise leadership. The leaders come from the suburbs for reasons noted above. The man from the community quickly recognizes that he does not have the wherewithal to assume leadership, and either contents himself with a minor role on the sidelines or retreats from the church.

If he does not recognize his limitations for leadership the minister doubtless will and may chill whatever ambition he may have cherished. This is not because the minister is a snob, but because he is a responsible executive faced with financing an expensive operation. He cannot afford to put the willing but relatively inept man at the head of an important

committee if he can persuade the banker or lawyer who have at least a nominal interest in the church to come back and accept the responsibility. The minister must spend so much time in the suburbs and the University club trying to elicit even the marginal support of his executives that he does not have time to develop the laboring man who lives in the community.

The final disappearance of all business and professional people from the church does not solve the problem for their relative places are taken by streetcar conductors and carpenters who come back from the suburbs to lead the church.

We are here confronted by a basic fact of human nature which is that people will not associate with those very much above or below them on the social and economic scale. For the Protestant church, whose basic nature is social, the city with its highly class conscious communities is a difficult environment in which to live and grow. This will be discussed further in a forthcoming section.

Each time there is a change in ministry, tension is likely to develop. There are always those who feel that a return to "the old time religion" will solve the problems. This is countered by demand of others for a continuation of the kind of leadership the church has had. Under such circumstances the life of the church becomes increasingly unharmonious, and all the time strength is ebbing away.

#### WHAT IS THE OUTCOME?

1. Some churches sell their buildings in the inner city and rebuild nearer the center of population of their membership. This solves their problem for awhile, but it does not solve the problem of the inner city that is left without moral and spiritual leadership.

2. Some churches merge either with other congregations of the same denomination or with churches of different denominations. Some mergers are successful but many others are merely postponements of final demise. Factors which militate against the success of mergers include:

a. The fact that they are entered into as last ditch measures of despair which were not really desired by either group.

b. In the merged church there are places for only about as many leaders as had formerly worked in each of the congregations. The physical facilities sometimes are such as to limit the merged congregation. When leadership and facilities are reduced the congregation is reduced.

c. The forces that caused them to merge still face them. The most successful mergers are those which take the congregations into better parts of the city. These cease to be inner city churches.

Some inner city churches are subsidized by their denominations and



become home mission stations. Others become neighborhood houses and look to the community fund for support.

Others die—slowly and agonizingly—but completely.

### CAN PROTESTANTISM SURVIVE IN THE INNER CITY?

A short, simple answer to the possibility of Protestant survival in the inner city is: as presently conceived and constituted, no. Certain characteristics of Protestantism must be modified if it is to adjust to the problems brought upon it by the growing city. At the heart of these characteristics is the attitude which led the pharisee to say, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men."

1. Theological exclusiveness. No partial gospel, not even the superiority of immersion as baptism, has sufficient power to convert the inner city.

2. Social and economic exclusiveness. People being as they are, the Christian gospel thus far has only conditioned them to belong to churches in which about three of the six generally recognized classes belong. (upper upper, lower upper, upper middle, lower middle, upper lower, and lower lower) The bulk of the membership of a church tends to come from one class, with a strong group from the class below, and the top leaders coming from the class above. In a preceding section we saw the problem of a church with upper middle class leadership to serve a lower lower class community.

Before we criticize the Protestant church too harshly, let us reflect that no other institution does as well in bringing so many groups together in a social situation. Most of the contacts across class lines are not social in the sense the word is being used here. The lower upper class lady and her servants may be on friendly terms but that does not mean that the gardener brings his "missus" to play bridge with the banker and his wife.

The Protestant church, however, is a social situation. In churches in the lower half of the social spectrum great emphasis is placed upon friendliness in church. In churches in the upper half, friendliness is not emphasized so much, but the members are friendly with the ones with whom they are friendly. People go to Protestant churches to find friends, to place their children in contact with other children whom they approve, and to expose their young people to prospective mates. No aspect of the work of the church is more important than this. Christianity is caught as well as taught, and the value of the church as a sustaining group, a larger family, cannot be overemphasized.

The Roman Catholic church manages to serve a wider span of classes at the expense of being less social. The Roman Catholic does not commune with his fellow worshipper, his relationship to God is individual. The number or the personality of worshippers in the service is of no con-

cern to him nor to the priest. After the service he does not presume to shake hands with other worshippers simply because all belong to the same church.

It is not suggested that the Protestant church become less social, but it must be recognized that even with modern transportation facilities, the bulk of an urban church's membership will come from no more than one mile. If its membership comes from greater distances, it is in trouble whether it knows it or not.

Parenthetically it should be added that churches tend to think their members come from a greater distance than is actually the case. This is because the leadership (the most conspicuous people) tends to come greater distances. Fifteen years ago the minister of an inner city church assured me solemnly that his flock came great distances to church. As a matter of fact, as late as two years ago most of the members lived within a mile of the church, and nearly 90% of the children's division of the Church school lived within walking distance.

In order to cope with the facts of human snobbery, the church must increasingly think of itself in terms of its geographical parish and meet the needs of the people who live there. Of course, exclusiveness should be dismissed, too, but this will take longer.

3. Racial exclusiveness. Here again we are confronted by a stubborn fact of human nature which we do not like, yet which is changed only too slowly. Since we tend to join churches for the social reasons described above, we hesitate to unite with congregations of a different race unless we are social reformers trying to prove a point. This is true of all races.<sup>1</sup>

Resistance to admission of a non-white into a caucasian church is usually great, sometimes greater than to bringing an unimmersed Presbyterian into a Disciples church. However, resistance tends to be higher in inner city situations where non-whites live in large numbers capable of taking over a church quickly. It is one of the interesting phenomena of church social action that liberality on the subject of inclusion of non-whites increases in direct ratio to the distance from a considerable group of Negroes.

For this reason, integration of Negroes into white churches can best be started in towns where there are relatively few non-whites. In such places, non-whites can be brought in without threatening the leadership with change. Most of our churches under such circumstances could assimilate a small percentage of Negroes who were the intellectual and economic peers of the rest of the members. If our churches generally over the country did this, a climate would be created which would make

<sup>1</sup> One does not prove a general assertion by citing a single specific instance, he only illustrates what he believes to be a truth. In response to specific questioning as to how his church would react to integration of white members, the pastor of a large Negro church said, "We could take up to a dozen or so white members. If the number got much bigger than that, or if they began to assume too much leadership there would be trouble."

it easier for the inner city church to begin the process of integration even though it may mean a complete turn-over from white to black in ten years or less.<sup>2</sup>

### EFFECT OF CHURCH ORGANIZATION

Protestantism is crippled in the inner city because of its lack of over-all strategy. The Disciples share in this general debility, but it suffers under the additional handicap of local congregational autonomy. Congregationalism is, of course, in germ in the New Testament, just as are also the presbyterial and episcopal forms of church government. However, when a first century custom is legalized into twentieth century rule, trouble is likely to develop.

At no point is the inadequency of congregationalism more painfully apparent than in the inner city. When Paul wrote "we are members of one another" he surely was referring to a wider relationship than that of the members of a local church to one another. Being "all one in Christ" at least in theory, should impose obligations upon churches that cannot be decided by one group acting independently. It is obviously unfair for one congregation to move into the parish of another to the latter's hurt for no better reason than it no longer wants to serve its own community, yet congregational churches regularly practice such tactics and are even held in esteem by some of their brethren while they are doing it.

In the case of an inner city church there is rarely anyone in leadership who made much of a contribution to the building or its capital asset 50 years previously. The congregation as presently constituted has inherited a building toward which they have contributed nothing except in meager upkeep. Yet, under the theory of congregational self-government, a remnant of bitter-enders feel justified in making any disposition of the property that is to their advantage, no matter how foreign their action may be to the spirit of those who built the building, or how detrimental to other Christian groups, or how insensitive to the best interests of the community. Even though such practice may be justified by prooftexts from the New Testament, it is obviously unchristian.

So long as a congregational church is happy and prosperous it often feels no need of consultation with other Christians. When a congregational inner city church's disintegration is far advanced it tends to be resentful and suspicious of any outside counsel. Thus we have the spectacle of run-down, inner city churches making the most important decisions of their lives under the poorest leadership they have ever had.

It is this writer's opinion that the Disciples of Christ must alter its practice of congregationalism at two points: the holding of title and the calling and discharging of ministers. The presbyterial system contains

<sup>2</sup> The Negro church in the inner city is not discussed in this paper since it presents a different set of problems. It is assumed, however, that there will be such churches and that many more should be established.



features which congregationalism might do well to adopt. Here the local congregation holds title for the presbytery and in the democratic fashion can do anything with it except mortgage or sell it.

The practice of relating ministers to churches should be taken out of the hands of secretaries and given as responsibility to pastoral relations committees of city or county whose written recommendation should be secured before a local pulpit committee takes its recommendation to the official board. The same pastoral relations committee should have the power to dissolve the pastoral relationship if tension which it cannot iron out develops in the local church.

It is sometimes more important to evict a minister than to choose the proper one in the first place. The Disciples have made progress in the field of ministerial placement (without New Testament authority) but the sainted bogey of congregational autonomy has kept us from considering ways and means of evicting a minister.<sup>1</sup>

### NEED FOR PROTESTANT STRATEGY

The denominational system has proved itself bankrupt at many points, but at no point so dramatically as in the inner city. In Chicago a strategy is being developed for the outer city whereby every community will have an effective denominationally-sponsored, community-related church. A similar plan is on the "drawing board" for the inner city and will be carried through as fast as possible. Extensive studies are being made which will tell us more about the inner city church than has ever been known before. In the light of these studies, the representatives of co-operative protestantism will chart a strategy.

Up to this point we have proceeded on trial and error basis. Slowly and painfully we have discovered the problems but very few solutions. Actually the problems are so new we haven't yet been able to adjust ourselves to deal with them adequately.

But deal with the problem we must. In Chicago a population equivalent to that of Kansas or Oklahoma lives in the inner city where scarcely an old-line, white, Protestant church is holding its own. If it is said, "This is only Chicago," let it be remembered that in 1950 twenty-five percent of America's population lived in ten cities in Chicago's class. Let it also be remembered that several cities of less than 1,000,000 where the Disciples have a real stake are developing impressive inner city prob-

<sup>1</sup> The Chicago Disciples Union has a Pastoral Relations Committee composed of local church leaders. By profession one is a school teacher and housewife, one a professional counsellor, one a minister with psychiatric training, one an office manager, and one a seminary professor. By request, the committee listens to grievances from ministers or laymen or both. It makes no recommendations since only one church makes constitutional provision for them to go that far. (cf. the appendix which concludes this article) However, when both parties to a dispute are able to tell their story to objective listeners they are helped to clarify their own minds.

As matters now stand among the Disciples, any group in a church who want to terminate the services of the minister has no orderly or constitutional procedure. The vicious behaviour WHICH IS PRODUCED BY THE SYSTEM (or lack of it) in both churches and ministers is too well known to elaborate here.

lems. There is tremendous need for a quickened interest which in turn will lead to study and experimentation, and planning and work that will enable us to make Protestantism victorious over this greatest threat ever to appear against it.

## APPENDIX

A section of the constitution providing for a more effective relation of local church to city or county pastoral relations committee with respect to the ministry is reproduced here for study.

The minister shall be chosen by the church as hereinafter provided:

1. A pulpit committee of four or six persons and chairman shall be appointed by the official Board and charged, in cooperation with the Pastoral Relations Committee of the Chicago Disciples Union, with the responsibility of seeking out and investigating candidates for the ministry of the church.
2. The candidate must have the written endorsement of the Pastoral Relations Committee of the Chicago Disciples Union.
3. The candidate must then be approved by the Official Board of the church.
4. After these steps, and only then, shall the candidate be placed before the congregation for acceptance or rejection.
5. The minister, when approved by the congregation, shall be installed by the officers of the church and the Chicago Disciples Union.
6. The Official Board shall annually reconsider the minister's salary in the light of his effectiveness of leadership and in relation to the cost of living.
7. It is assumed that the relationship between pastor and congregation will be harmonious and fruitful. However, if at any time tension, sufficient to jeopardize the effectiveness of the church, develops, the Pastoral Relations Committee of the Chicago Disciples Union must be called upon to make investigation and recommendations. If at all possible, the Committee shall restore harmony. If, on the other hand, the Committee finds that the rift is too deep to be healed, it may dissolve the pastoral relationship for the best interest of both the minister and the church.

## The Nature of the Church

*George Earle Owen, Indianapolis, Indiana*

The nature of the church is described more easily than it is defined. The nature of this divine-human institution is seen in its purposes and ministry to man and society. The following terms, although more suggestive than definite, are nonetheless authentic in depicting some of the manifold aspects of the Christian church. It is the case of the noun

serving as a descriptive adjective. There is some overlapping in terminology but this only depicts the varied nature of the Church of Jesus Christ.

The church is *Fellowship*. This is the most elemental characteristic of the Christian Church. Reduced to the absolute minimum the church is the fellowship of those who follow Christ. "Where Christ is, there is the church" and "where two or three are gathered in my name" expresses the essence of Christianity and the basis of the church. Both Christian baptism and the Lord's Supper are symbolic expressions of fellowship. Whatever violates fellowship strikes at the heart of the Christian Church. To make creeds, rites, beliefs and ordinances, which have grown out of the fellowship of the church, the test of fellowship, is to subordinate the end to the means. Love is the final test of fellowship. "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples because you love one another."

The church is an *Institution*. The Christian Church is institutionalized Christianity. Christianity began as a fellowship, grew into a movement, and became an institution. Without an institutional structure the fellowship failed and the movement floundered in carrying out its reason for being. Institution is the structure that function takes, the organization purpose employs, to carry out its mission. An institution exists to establish and carry out the will of its founder and followers. The church was established by Christ to carry out his will on earth, namely, to create the reign of God in every human heart.

The church is the *Body of Christ*. It is the human embodiment of the life of Christ on a universal, practical basis. Just as the human body is the temple of the spirit so the church is the body or temple in which Christ resides and through which he works. The more fully he is permitted to permeate the body of his followers, the more fully and truly is it the Body of Christ. The church like the human body carries in its being human frailties as well as divine possibilities. Christ is the Head of the church.

The church is a *Continuation of the Incarnation*. It is God's continued participation in human history through the instrumentality of Jesus Christ and his disciples. Through Jesus Christ God entered into humanity more concretely. Through the church He still enters into the life of men and societies. The church declares to the world that God is immanent, that He dwells among men, that He works through men, that however evil the flesh may become God can cleanse it, use it, and dwell in it. The church carries on through its fellowship and ministry the mission of Christ.

The church is *Mission*. This term conveys the inner nature and central



purpose of Christianity. The true church is a witnessing community. It is the herald of hope for all mankind, the power line through which God's transforming power can operate, the channel and agent of conversion. It is not only a "saving remnant" but *God's Salvation Army*. This is to say that the church is more than an ark of salvation to which people may flee when in danger. It is Christianity on the march, carrying the message of God's love to the far corners of the earth, battling the forces of evil, championing the oppressed, lifting up the downtrodden, giving liberty to the captives, loosing the bonds of Satan on men of all nations, marching under the banner of the Cross, living and dying on a thousand mission fields to proclaim Christ as King of Kings. It is militant Christianity facing injustice, inequity, exploitation, prejudice, and every attack of human freedom and dignity. The church is a fellowship of those who are concerned for the "lost". It is the company of those who have been "called out" of the world to be saved and those "sent out" into the world to save the world.

The church is the *Voice of God's Judgment*. The church does not presume to execute God's judgment but to proclaim it. As an instrument of God's grace and revelation in an evil world, it declares that all men stand under the judgment of God. Jesus Christ is the world's judge as well as its savior. The ultimate moral critic of culture in a world of changing values is the Christian Church. The Christian church has never had a greater role than it has today in the revolutionary world as the Supreme Court of Justice among the Congress of Nations.

The church is *Revolution*. The church does more than denounce evil and declare the righteousness of God. As the custodian of the Gospel the church serves as God's great agent of change. Even today God is speaking and acting in the world in revolution through his church. Back of the discontent of millions of underprivileged is the Bible. To many of the world's people the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the fellowship of vicarious suffering and respect for human personality are still a revolutionary doctrine. The Gospel is leaven that slowly changes men and society but it is also the new wine that breaks the old wineskins of archaic practice and static tradition. The Gospel is the dynamite of God. It can blast tyrants from their throne and break down the barriers that separate men. Even Marxist communism is heretical Christianity, the dialectical idealism of Hegel turned upside down into dialectical materialism. In a world of evil the church is God's instrument of revolution, to challenge and change the wrong and usher in God's Kingdom, the Kingdom of Right Relations.

The church is *Reconciliation*. The church is more than a fellowship or organization. It is a reconciling fellowship, a redemptive society. "God

was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself" describes the purpose of the incarnation and mission of Christ and his church. Christianity is distinct from all other revolutions in that it has at the beginning Revelation and at the end Reconciliation. Modern technology with new means of communication and transportation has broken down the walls of time and space only to see created new walls of estrangement that separate men. The Christian church, despite its limitations, represents the one fellowship that can transcend the social, national, and cultural barriers that divide mankind. The world will never be *one* until it is *won* for Christ and it will never be *won* for Christ until it is *one* in Christ.

The church is the *Beloved Community*. It is the only society that welcomes into one fellowship saints and sinners, the high and lowly, the rich and poor, the merciful and the mean, the good and the bad. It is a divine family, whose God is a heavenly Father, whose head is Christ our Lord, whose members are sons of God and Christian brothers. It is the *Household of God*, "the colony of heaven" on earth. It is the community of the Forgiven and the Forgiving. No other community has the comprehensive "Whosoever" and "Inasmuch" that the Christian church has. Brotherhood, universality, and ecumenicity are written into its very constitution. Greater than the judgment of God is the love of God. Greater than revolution is reconciliation. The mission of the church is to bring all men into the joyous and abiding fellowship of this Beloved Community.

## A Few Words In Defense of the Circle

*Thomas L. Hanna, Chicago, Illinois*

In his typically emphatic manner, Reinhold Niebuhr has, in different places and in different ways, advised his readers that there is nothing so meaningless as a circle. This is indeed the remark of a historically-minded thinker. All of us must admit that in this day and time it is seldom if ever that we find ourselves talking about circles; the question of circles seems to be so unimportant that we could hardly even class it as a secondary issue, and all of us would be somewhat suspicious of anyone who seemed wrought up over this matter. So that when we discover a man of Mr. Niebuhr's stature in the act of making a gratuitous swipe at a dead issue our curiosity is piqued, and we naturally would like to learn a little more about this business of the circle. Of course, we must take Mr. Niebuhr at his word about the meaninglessness of the circle. This being done, we suddenly realize that as Mr. Niebuhr views the newly budded leaves, the opening tulips, the frolicsome children racing again

through fresh and verdant fields and as he, for the sixtieth odd time, hears the first cuckoo of the spring he is deeply galled by the meaningless circularity of this event. We must imagine also that as he sits down each evening to what is now his hundred thousandth supper, an awful sense of despair engulfs him as he gazes on his pork chop. And in another way, we must imagine that as he repeatedly lifts his communion cup, or sets up another season's Christmas tree or views again a church sanctuary filled with Easter lilies, he is only aware of the meaninglessness of this circularity.

But, of course, something is wrong here. We know immediately that this is not the way in which any of us react to them. Also we know immediately that these are, in fact, very meaningful events despite their manifestly repetitive nature. It appears that the circle is not, after all, so meaningless, and that it may be important to us to attempt understanding why. This will involve some reflexion on the way in which all of us, including Mr. Niebuhr, think about the nature of those events which make up our history. This effort to say a few words in defense of the circle pushes us ineluctably into a discussion of the meaning or meaninglessness of history.

The first step is to recognize that it must be incorrect to say that repeated events are meaningless, inasmuch as they are obviously full of meaning. The confusion here is that Mr. Niebuhr has made a complete separation between the objective appearance of circularity and the individual's experience of this. This is an artificial separation, purely intellectual in nature; only in the combination of these two realities do we have experience, and it is precisely in experience that we shall come to terms with this problem of historical meaning. What we must realize is that the question of the meaningfulness of history is not a question of whether or not there is an apparent order or pattern in history. There could be little dispute that there is such a basic pattern in our world. Rather the question of history's meaningfulness is a problem of *correspondence* between the "meaning" of history and the demand for meaning which the individual brings to history. It is not a matter of finding *any* order or teleology in natural and human events, but a matter of finding such an order which corresponds to the meaning of individual men. Thus, we bring only confusion to this problem unless we understand clearly that the question of historical meaning centers in the individual's response which queries: "Is this meaningful *for me*?"

Having taken this first step, we can enlarge on the problem by noting, for example, that the deists of the 18th century understood that the inner mechanism of the world was complete and self-sufficient, operating smoothly like a clock. Is this a meaningful world? Or is it simply an



orderly world? or again, what if it becomes obvious that the pattern of biological and natural history points necessarily to eventual extinction of the human race and the ultimate triumph of the hymenoptera as the dominant genera of life? This is most certainly a teleological pattern in history, but is it meaningful? The answer to both of these questions is that however "meaningful" this may be as a pattern for my objective environment, it assuredly is not meaningful for me. If this is the nature of history then it is a meaningless history. The two meanings in question are incommensurate.

However true this may be, it is nevertheless the wont of most thinkers to view history in other terms. One most frequently hears the problem phrased in this manner: "To say that history is meaningful and not repetitive and meaningless, is to say that events in history are patterned not simply on physical and organic laws but also have an added directive force, which, like these laws, is sovereign in its teleology". This way of stating the problem does not necessarily have anything to do with the possible or actual meaningfulness of human existence, but refers specifically to a developing meaning in events apart from the individual, i.e., it effectively denies any correspondence between the individual and his objective world. The effect of this conception of historical meaning is to posit the presence of an autonomous force in history which, whether in league with or in opposition to individuals, is nonetheless independent of them. This is an objective force which men must contend with and understand just as they do with all objective laws. The effect of this is the postulation of a sovereign "god" which is active in history but is outside the hegemony of any individual.

Most persons would readily agree, as does Mr. Niebuhr, that the question of meaning is crucial for human existence and is the central problem in religion. The only difficulty is to decide where it is that meaning is to be found. We can, as has just been shown, posit it as objectively effective in history, but we can also speak of meaning as a conscious demand of the individual, i.e., on one hand we can assume that the pattern of history somehow corresponds to man's ultimate aspirations even though this correspondence is not apparent; on the other hand, we can *conclude* that although the meaning of history does not show any such correspondence, yet the individual demand that history should correspond to his aspirations remains a valid and real source of meaning.

The former and more prevalent conception of this problem has many advantages, the principle one being that a man's assumption that his history is meaningful *for him* gives this man security and peace of mind. This assumption solves the ultimate religious question about the in-

dividual's relation to the world and the nature of his existence in time. This is an ultimate security which gives man the confidence to attack the secondary problems of ethical action. The specifically religious anxiety has been conquered and the ultimate battle with history won; the individual is now faced with ethical demands for the implementation and fulfillment of a history which is meaningful. The ultimate battle being won, it is now the ethical problem of an eternal "mopping up" operation. No matter what happens now, the individual will never feel that his whole being is at stake or that his very existence is called into question. He has escaped this anxiety.

But there would also seem to be a few advantages to the latter and rarer view of history that holds that history displays no meaningful accord with ultimate human aspirations; that the individual is conscious of his own meaning, of history's threat to it, and of his need to affirm, preserve, and buttress this meaning. One apparent advantage of this viewpoint is that it is conducive to an honest and lucid appraisal of history; there is no impetus to read into history a meaning which is not present. Another feature of this view which may be of value is that the individual finds that history and time are *serious*, i.e., they have an importance for his whole being and alert his interest because he has no assurance that his individuality is automatically guaranteed and assured by time and history. For him, history is intractable, uncertain, and cannot be given confidence, and this is serious for him precisely because it means that it is only he who can assert and guarantee his ultimate claims upon life. Because history is serious, the individual has no choice but to assert his demands against history in the constant effort to reshape and recreate this history. But there is also a third feature of this view-point which may have some value. This is that a man who lives in this kind of tension with his history lives a religious life. The religious life is marked by this one abiding feature, that an individual gives his whole being for the sake of the ultimate meaning of his life. The ethical life is a demand upon a man's energy, intelligence, and training in the defense of what is ultimately assured by history as meaningful. The religious life is a demand not merely upon man's practical faculties but upon his very reason for existence—a demand which calls him to defend what is ultimately uncertain and unassured by history. In the religious life a man is truly anxious for his "soul".

To return again to the former view of history, we must note that once the meaningfulness of history is assured, then personal meaning is no longer at stake—for this is ultimately assured by history. Nor is historical meaning at stake—for this is assured as ultimate. The net effect of the assumption of a meaningful history is to presume that the question of the

ultimate relation of the individual to his world is a closed question; it is a foreclosure of the religious problems of man's existence, leaving only the ethical problem of how man is to bring himself into relation with this historical meaning. For the ethical life, existence is a "test" in which the individual proves his mettle.

In short, if the problem of a meaningful history is basically a question of correspondence between "my" ultimate demands and history's given patterns, then to assume that this demand is satisfied by history even before this is apparent in history is the fallacy of inverting the horse and the cart: one has intellectually foreclosed a problem which is primarily religious. The assertion of one's meaning comes *first*: only after this does the intellect attempt to judge the correspondence of individual meaning to the patterns of history. To do the reverse is to escape an existential anxiety for the sake of an intellectual security. It is the cutting short of anxiety and its assertion into history as a *fait accompli*. This abdication of the religious life gives rise to a "meaning" which is identical in nature to the natural laws of the objective world—laws of existence to which we must actively conform in ethical activity. And the irony of this whole proceeding is that the individual has thereby created a history which is, *to him*, ultimately meaningless; it is a history to which *he* must correspond, for his ultimate *raison d'être* is outside of him, static and objective. And the irony becomes tragic if some individual suddenly realizes that this history is a threat to *his* existence and revolts against it, for this means that the reawakening of the religious life is, from this point of view, a revolt against "God". It is a revolt against that sovereign force which presumably gives ultimate assurance to the meaning of history.

What we must understand is that if we are to speak at all about historical meaning it can only be in terms of a relation between the individual and his world in which the individual's demand for ultimate meaning is definitory; once this demand is asserted, the intellect may judge whether or not it finds its response in history. If we do the contrary and posit some meaning in history as definitory, then the individual stands helpless before the tyranny of history; he has abdicated the function of asserting ultimate demands and judgments on history and has made himself a willing instrument of history. In this abdication, the individual turns his consciousness outward to history with the ultimate conviction that the world and its historical process is "good". He can say no other, because he has lost the right to do so. He has denied that he is free, which is to say that he has denied that he has the responsibility for his own ultimate meaning. In traditional Christian terms, he has denied the *imago Dei*; in traditional philosophical terms he has denied human nature. He has lost the only reality a man is given to know: *his*



reality. He has lost the only truth a man is given to know: *his* truth. He is no longer anxious for his "soul": he has denied it.

What we must understand about the religious life is that the meaning for which the individual is in anxiety is not an intellectual clarity or a cogent rational formula; the meaning for which a man is anxious involves not only his intellect and his ability to discriminate ideas but it involves his conscious self, his reflective being. In the ethical life, a man finds a passive peace because between himself and the world stands the mediation of an intellectual judgment assuring the conscious self that life is ultimately "good". In the religious life, however, a man finds anxiety and suffering because no intellectual judgment has mediated the world to him as "good"; what he asserts in respect to the world cannot be guaranteed or sustained by the intellect: the assertion of *his* meaning can be sustained only by an action of his conscious self which is called passion. Only in the passion of self-affirmation can an individual sustain a demand which is uncertain and unassured. And conversely, it is only a demand which is uncertain that requires passion in order to exist. What we are suggesting is that the religious life is a struggle for "faith". This is not a struggle to achieve "faith" but a struggle to sustain a faith in the ultimate meaning of one's existence. Faith is synonymous with passion because both center in a conviction which is problematic. It is problematic because it is unsupported by the world, its history, and the intellect which judges this history; as such, if this problematic assertion is to exist at all it can exist only by a constant passionate affirmation by the conscious self of its own meaning. This is the peculiarly religious activity which is faith—a term categorically distinct from "knowledge". What is also being suggested is that if faith is conceived as an intellectual judgment about the objective world or a super-objective world, then it is religiously a fraud, inasmuch as it is not an existential assertion but an intellectual judgment, not an activity of passion but a passivity of certitude, not religious but ethical and intellectual.

This conception of history and of its relation to individual men is, of course, an "existential" conception. I am only too acutely aware of the difficulty of making clear this conception; the jargon of existential thought has as many limitations as it does possibilities for expression. But this seems to be the inescapable dilemma of any attempt to understand that which is more than a knowledge. Whether one expresses this conception of the individual and his relation to the world as a "despair" in which the individual "dies away from the world", or as a "revolt" in which the individual discovers his own unique value in opposition to the world, or as "self-affirmation", "willing oneself", or "choosing oneself", still the reality in question is only imaginatively suggested and can serve merely as an invitation to the discovery of this reality in oneself. And the prob-

lem of communicating this conception of things is as old as it is recent and suffers the same limitations in the injunction that a man must "lose the world in order to gain his soul". The problem of existential expression is the problem of religious expression: both are concerned with the same reality. And the contribution of existential philosophy to religion is precisely its insistence that the freedom of the conscious self is a *reality*, a subjective reality which is distinct and self-defining, and which is not to be subsumed under objective reality as a sub-species. If the realm of the self-conscious self is a *real* and yet a distinct component of human experience, then we have the possibility of discussing the religious life in respect to its real contribution to human experience and its real value as an effective force in history. It is this wider conception of reality that is assumed in our approach to the problem of meaning in history. Meaning is nothing more than the awareness of a relation, i.e., of a correspondence. The correspondence in question is that between two realities: the reality of the objective world and the reality of the subjective world of experience. If an individual is aware of the reality of his self-conscious existence, then he is in a position to judge whether this inner reality corresponds to the objective reality of experience, i.e., whether this objective reality is meaningful. It is my own understanding that this correspondence is, according to the dual nature of reality, impossible, and that the discovery of this incommensurability between oneself and the objective world offers the occasion for a religious life in which the individual affirms his autonomous reality in spite of this lack of correspondence. In this tension with the world the individual increasingly defines the uniqueness of his nature and therefore draws the demand that he asserts into history in the effort of creation. Whatever more the religious life may be, it is my conviction that this is its essential character. It is a life which is true because it is difficult; and it is difficult because the truth is that the ultimate reality of the individual is related to the reality of his world only in freedom. Consequently, the true life can be lived only in the passionate affirmation of the sources of this freedom.

So, then, if some of us have an aversion to circles it is only because the repetitiousness which we fear outside of us is but a reflection of that real fear of repetition and bondage within us. All of us should be able to say a few words in defense of the circle, inasmuch as the circularity of our history creates a kind of resentment within us which serves as a reminder of our freedom and of the ultimate responsibility which this imposes upon us.

# Apprehensions of Creation

Clyde C. Smith, Chicago, Illinois

What we know as Western thought may be considered a fusion of Hebrew religiousness and Greek speculation. It is an interesting observation that these two aspects may be strikingly illustrated by a comparative study of the two languages. Whereas Greek is adapted for abstract thought by its profuseness of words of a modifying character which allow for all shades of meaning, Hebrew is adapted for poetry and picture painting—the rapid movement of events starkly presented. This economy of words common to the Hebrew of the Old Testament even flowed over into the Greek of the New Testament (which with the common language of its day has long been distinguished from classical Greek by the epithet *koine*).

Hebrew is an elemental earthy language which likes verbs, has few adjectives and even fewer adverbs. And there is a pliable character to its verbs which give them a moving quality. The tenses of Hebrew verbs stand out in sharp contrast to the Indo-European usage (particularly noticeable in the Greek of the classical philosophers). Whereas tense in these languages regularly implies time—past, present, future; in Hebrew tense implies the extent of the completion of action irrespective of past, present, or future. Thus the poets and prophets of Israel can conceive things which lie in the imaginable future as already accomplished, and thus describe these events with the perfect (completed) tense. To the eyes of those who see the purpose of God in history, it is already as good as accomplished. Similarly, the recitation of the victorious acts of God which brought Israel into being may be achieved by using the imperfect (incompleted) tense, thus reliving in faith the glorious days of old.

In the classical period of the Hebrew language there was no formal philosophical writing; there were philosophers in an elemental sense, but they were never systematic. It is the aspect of system which is the contribution of the Greek side of our tradition. It would seem that for our philosophical insights from the Hebrew side of our tradition we must be satisfied with such general observations as these concerning the language (particularly as it was used by the poet-prophets).

However, it is precisely in the classical period of Hebrew history that we find the concern for creation—in the epics of the early nationalists and in the poetry of the prophetic monotheists. In all of these there is but one common reference:

Sing to YHWH, for He has triumphantly triumphed;

The horse and his charioteer He has thrown into the sea.<sup>1</sup>

In several ways it could be argued that the Exodus—the escape from



Egypt by some segment, however small, of the total Semitic people known as Hebrews—was in Israel's history *the* creation story, for that escape made such a profound impression that it was remembered and celebrated in both personal consciousness and corporate cultus forever after. For in a real sense the writers proclaimed that this event was the creation of a new nation by YHWH, God of Israel. It is equally true that the account of the victory of YHWH over Pharaoh parallels the type of conflict which lies at the root of many of the creation myths of the Near East. But in another sense the Hebrew writers know that this was not *the* creation, for the people remembered and adopted tales of their ancestors; or as we might say, as this people attempted to understand their particular election by their God, ancestors and ancestral covenants populated their heritage.

Nevertheless, this historical event was the structure of experience which undergirded both the culture and the faith of this people. And it provided the impetus for their understanding of creation. Combining the sense of destiny implied by their election in the Exodus with the literary potentialities of their language, the writers of the Old Testament—whoever they were, individuals or groups, creating independently or recording oral tradition—produced the basic insight that “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

This insight has stood as true for nearly the whole of Western Christian civilization. What has complicated this insight are the questions: What is the nature of this God? and, Of what did this kind of God create this kind of World? It is my conviction that the Hebrews never systematically answered either of these questions, although in dealing in later Judaism with the problem of theodicy they did raise the former one. The latter would appear to reflect Greek influence.

Hebrew culture was constantly under the impact of its contemporaries, while Hebrew faith, because of the efforts of both prophets and priests, was perennially given new content in order to meet the demands of the changing cultural environment. That this latter could occur illustrates the understanding of creation which they had derived from the redemptive act of God in the Exodus. Both creation and redemption were modes of affirming the *freedom* of God in history. This is the *freedom* to “do a new thing”. The Spirit which moved “over the face of the waters” symbolizes this creative *freedom*.

The contrasting character of Greek thought with respect to creation has been indicated by Whitehead: “Both for Plato and for Aristotle the process of the actual world has been conceived as a real incoming of forms into real potentiality, issuing into that real *togetherness* which is the actual thing.”<sup>2</sup> What this seems to indicate in the Greek mode of thought is the primacy of order or the *structure* of God.

Greek philosophical speculation concerning creation, like the Hebrew religious insight, is rooted in the myth-complex of dim antiquity. In the ancient Greek myths creation is a sort of by-product of the generation of the gods. The only active principles would seem to be Eros, and perhaps Strife. In any case at the beginning there was Chaos, and whether by Oedipean conflict of the gods who were generated or by the action of Eros, from this primeval abyss some stability was achieved. At least the movement was in the direction of order, which is the suggestion of Plato in the *Timaeus*:

Let me tell you then why the Creator made this world of generation. He was good, and the good can never have any jealousy of anything. And being free from jealousy, he desired that all things should be as like himself as they could be. This is in the truest sense the origin of creation and of the world, as we shall do well in believing on the testimony of wise men: God desired that all things should be good and nothing bad, so far as this was attainable. Wherefore finding the whole of what was visible not at rest, but moving in an irregular and disorderly fashion, out of disorder he brought order, considering that this was in every way better than the other.<sup>3</sup>

What this discussion points us to is a possible Christian theological alternative to the understanding of creation which has prevailed through most of the history of Christian thought. This tradition has affirmed that God created all that exists out of nothing, and at the same time denied that He is also the source of evil. The alternative is rooted in the prophetic awareness which was rejected by "normative Judaism" and classical Christianity, but which is the heart of the Christian *kerygma*—that *creation can be affirmed because of redemption*, and that *redemption is new creation*. The creation of God *was* good, but it was not good enough. God as the *integrity of structure and freedom* is ever creating—not new worlds, but a new World. And His creation is the Spirit's work of grace and judgment ever in the midst of individual lives and collective societies.

We are not here attempting to avoid the questions which have complicated the religious insight of God's creative activity. But in the manner of the Hebrews we are trying to indicate that creation has significance *for* man only in terms *of* man. The poem which stands at the beginning of the Bible—both Old and New Testaments—concludes creation with man. Theologically the concern for creation begins with man. For man with his symbolic ability is the only creature who can ask the question of his own origin. The World in which he finds himself, and the same World which lies in the pre-human past, is his given. Man lives in a World which includes him; behind that he cannot probe. He can only

affirm in faith on the basis of the newness in his own life that "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

To this general Biblical apprehension, Christian theology adds one thing—that the Word which gave structure to God's freedom in the activity of creation also entered into the life of the creation in the form of a man, and that through his God works to reconcile the World unto Himself. Why the need of reconciliation? The creation endowed man with freedom—the image of his Creator. But in contrast to God man received a finite structure. The integrity of freedom and infinite structure is the mysterious nature of God. That man must struggle for an integrity of freedom with a finite structure is the risk of creation and the adventure of living.

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 15:21, personal translation.

<sup>2</sup> A. N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: The Social Science Book Store, 1929), p. 147.

<sup>3</sup> Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. by B. Jowett (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1949), p. 13 Steph. 30).

## Meditation of An Adjunct Professor

*F. E. Davison, South Bend, Indiana*

Prelude:

What does "adjunct" mean? Webster says: "another things," "an accessory," "an appendage". I suppose then, I am to be another gadget that Eureka College is to endure—an "accessory" like a cigar lighter in a car—but an "appendage"? Does that mean surgery? Perhaps so—after a few weeks.

First Week:

My learned friends knew I was allergic to work. Why did they let me get into this job? These students—they act like they expect something from me! Just wait until I unload my outlined lectures to them!

Second Week:

Well, those lectures are unloaded. Now what? That class in "Survey of the Bible" meets for two hours a day, five days a week. That means another 40 lectures. Why didn't I take a course like this when I was in college or seminary? Then I could have handed the class my musty notes. In the courses I took, ten or twelve weeks were spent trying to decide whether Luke wrote Acts, or someone else by the name of Luke.

Third Week:

This is interesting! I believe by giving it 15 hours a day I will know something about the Bible. At least I'll make the students do some research and thereby teach me a thing or two. These Old Testament characters are full of life and meaning. Why haven't I preached more sermons about them?



#### Fourth Week:

Tomorrow I will ask each of three different groups to pantomime some Old Testament incidents to see if the other two groups can guess the incident and give the details. Now it is tomorrow. We are out in the outdoor theater. The pantomine is on. What are those fellows doing down on all fours in the bushes? Yonder comes a man down the hill looking in every direction. He meets another man and they have pantomine conversation. The second man takes the tall brother back to the bushes to show him the two hiding there. It now begins to dawn on even the professor. It is Saul, son of Kish, looking for his father's asses. That is one Old Testament story that will not be forgotten.

#### Fifth Week:

Mid term exam is over—a stiff one, it was. Students made good grades, too. After grading papers for 3 hours I am beginning to feel like a full-blown professor. Must get them started on New Testament this week. Interpreter's Bible a great help to the students and a life-saver for the professor. Thank God I have a class that now can name the books of the Bible forwards and backwards, and can quote from memory many choice passages of Scripture. I was determined to get even with the professors who never made me memorize Scripture—only historical outlines.

#### Sixth Week:

My time at Chapel this week. Do I have what it takes? Since I am only an "adjunct", believe I will wade in on some things that need to be said to youth today. It's over and I did not get mobbed. Went to faculty meeting last night. After sitting still (approximately so) for 45 minutes, it suddenly dawned on me that I had graduated from official board meetings. The TV was more interesting but less important.

#### Seventh Week:

Believe I will show my students the dramatic possibilities of the Book of Acts. They respond by writing and presenting at Chapel, a moving dramatization under the title "Christianity's Hall of Fame". They decide to mimeograph copies for use in some of their youth groups at the home church and maybe at summer camp.

#### Eighth Week:

The end is not far! What a wonderful fellowship with the finest faculty that could be found anywhere. My students are now more like a part of my family. I will hate to leave them and will follow with great interest their future developments. What will they do to me when they read their final exam question—viz—"Write a Short Story of the Bible"? They did it. The lowest grade given was a B and three merited an A-plus.

### Ninth Week:

It is Commencement time. Privileged for the first time to march in the processional as a college professor. Was instructed by the Dean to wear my cap until I stood at the podium for the Commencement Prayer, and then remove the cap. When the prayer was over, my cap was still on my head. I talked it over with the Lord and He forgave me for that breach of reverence, but I am not sure the faculty overlooked the fluff.

Was asked to sign a contract for next Fall with my salary doubled. Since I was there for my room and board, I decided I could not eat twice as much next year. I told President Langston and Dean Noe that I am these days trying to run away from work instead of running into it.

### Conclusion:

It was fun! I was work! It was rewarding! It was youth-restoring! It was also revealing to see one of our worthy Church Colleges making brick without straw—or rather, developing church leaders without the funds necessary for such an important task.

## Christian Unity and Disciples Of Christ: A Review

*Irvin E. Lunger, Lexington, Kentucky*

CHRISTIAN UNITY AND DISCIPLES OF CHRIST by Winfred E. Garrison is an important contribution both to the Disciples and to the ecumenical movement. It not only helps Disciples understand their historic and contemporary relationship with the ecumenical movement and guides them as they confront their own problems and opportunities in this area, it provides, as well, an interpretation of the Disciples' interest and participation in the movement which other communions may study with profit. Furthermore, it sets a pattern which, if followed by other communions, would contribute greatly both to mutual understanding and to creative advance in Christian unity.

This book is the result of a conviction on the part of members of the Council on Christian Unity of Disciples of Christ that the cause of Christian unity would be furthered if each communion were to examine itself in light of the ecumenical ideal and produce an objective report and analysis of its historical involvement in the ecumenical movement and an appraisal of the manner in which current problems might be solved without violating the integrity of each communion's historic purposes and principles. Since little had been done in this area, the Council on Christian Unity in October, 1953, took the initiative and appointed a committee to define the nature of the study to be undertaken, to secure a publisher, and to commission an author. The committee named con-

sisted of Ronald E. Osborn, H. L. Smith and Irvin E. Lunger, chairman.

Once clarification of the project had been completed, the committee found in Wilbur E. Cramblet, president of the Christian Board of Publication, one who shared its conviction and enthusiasm and who offered to accept with the Council on Christian Unity the cost of publication. Dr. Cramblet was in hearty agreement with the committee that the author should be Winfred E. Garrison, able Disciples historian and distinguished participant in many ecumenical conferences and councils. Although Dr. Garrison was carrying a full academic load as professor of philosophy and religion at the University of Houston while continuing his work as literary editor of *The Christian Century*, he agreed to postpone work on a book he was then writing to accept responsibility for authorship of the proposed book on the Disciples and Christian Unity. He began his work on this volume late in 1953 and *CHRISTIAN UNITY AND DISCIPLES OF CHRIST* was published early in 1955. It might have been completed earlier but it was the author's desire to wait until after the Evanston meeting of the World Council of Churches before finishing his work in order that it might be more comprehensive and relevant.

In the year which has passed since the publication of *CHRISTIAN UNITY AND DISCIPLES OF CHRIST*\*, the significance of the work had been widely recognized by Disciples and with increasing appreciation by members of other communions interested in Christian Unity. With this volume Disciples say, "Here is the record of our history and purpose and a frank statement of the problems of Christian unity as we see them," and ask of the other communions, "What is yours?" As scholars of other ecumenically-minded church bodies prepare their own record, a new era of understanding and progress in cooperation and unity is heralded.

Dr. Garrison prefaces his book with a study of the rise of the denominationalism which divided Christendom and set Christian against Christian in the years culminating with the nineteenth century. He then traces the rise of the modern ecumenical movement—a movement which "is new, because it is the quest for a kind of unity the Church never had before—at least not since the Apostolic Age—and under conditions which did not exist until modern times. It is an attempt," he declares, "to reunite a Church which has already become divided, and to attain this reunion in a free world in which the old instruments of compulsion and suppression can no longer be used and are generally recognized as being inconsistent with the spirit of Christianity as well as the rights of man."

While recognizing that the quest for Christian unity was not the only concern of the two great movements which produced the Disciples of Christ—the Stone movement and the Campbell movement, Dr. Garrison

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reveals the depth of this concern in his excellent treatment of the early history of the brotherhood. The founding fathers, the author makes clear, were not only reacting against the sectarian bickerings which the denominational system tended to foster but were striving for a united church by virtue of a deep-seated conviction that the church is "essentially, intentionally and constitutionally one." This unity, they felt, could be realized if all Christians were ready and willing to obey the divine commands explicitly given in the Scriptures and to grant freedom in scriptural interpretation. Excellent documentation both in the text and in the appendix enhance the value of this chapter for the reader and student.

Turning from the initial thrust of the Disciples in the direction of Christian union, the author traces the events which led to a temporary eclipse of the unity ideal. While protesting that they were but organizing their beliefs and practices to hasten the achievement of their ultimate objective, the Disciples succumbed to many of the features of the denominational pattern. However, the passion for cooperation and unity could not be denied. In chapters on "Adventures in Cooperation" and "Federation: Councils of Churches", Dr. Garrison details the participation of Disciples in programs and agencies dedicated to cooperation and federation. Names and enterprises are given and the reader thrills with pride as the contribution of Disciples to ecumenical life and work is reported.

Recognizing that the modern ecumenical movement grew out of a discovery that a divided Christendom could not cope with a pagan environment, Dr. Garrison points out that it was the Disciples' historic plea rather than their discovery of a need for unity on the foreign field which was instrumental in their sharing in programs of comity, cooperation and unity both at home and abroad.

The emergence of the Council on Christian unity—known from 1913 to 1954 as the Association for the Promotion of Christian Unity—and the outstanding contribution it has made to the clarification of ecumenical objectives and to the advance toward unity are made the subject of another chapter in this volume. How the Council on Christian Unity has assisted the Brotherhood in study, representation and implementation in the area of Christian unity is carefully traced. The recognition by Disciples that "Christian unity is our business" makes the role of the Council a crucial one in our time.

The development of the modern ecumenical movement from Edinburgh in 1910 to Evanston in 1954 is made the basis of an informative chapter in which the immediate background of ecumenical activity as we now confront it is provided. This concise summary and brilliant interpretation will prove highly enlightening to the reader both because of the information provided and because of the knowledge that the

author was himself an active participant in the movement in this crucial period of its development.

Before considering the ecumenical movement since Evanston, Dr. Garrison pauses to examine the "history of unity and division within the ranks of the Disciples themselves, and a survey of their testimony for the union cause through preaching and print." In these two chapters, the internal schisms which have plagued the Disciples are examined and the results assessed. The voice of the pulpit and the writings of editors and authors are also recorded as they gave expression to the concern for Christian unity. In these pages history becomes alive and the participants in the struggle for unity stand forth vividly in the context of great events and ministries.

Two over-arching questions are confronted by the author in the concluding pages: What kind of united church do the Disciples want? What are they willing to do in order that there may be such a united church with themselves in it? These are fundamental questions and the answers Dr. Garrison proposes are both enlightening and provocative. While the author modestly recognizes that the answers he suggests are those of but one among many Disciples, the reader will immediately sense the honesty of his search for answers which are consistent with the nature of Christianity and with the principles by which the Disciples have been guided when they have been at their best. With profit to themselves and to the brotherhood, ministers and laymen may accept these questions and the author's answers as the basis for discussion and study. The problem is both that of understanding ourselves in light of historic principles and that of appraising what we, as a people, can and cannot do in ecumenical discussion and compromise.

Of great value to the reader who wishes to inform himself and to students who seek guidance for further study is the bibliography of Christian unity—listing books and pamphlets on this subject by Disciples—which follows the appendix at the close of the book. The author and Claude E. Spencer, curator of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society, worked together in preparing this valuable catalogue.

This, then, is the scope of *CHRISTIAN UNITY AND DISCIPLES OF CHRIST*. Its sweep includes the backgrounds of denominationalism which called forth the ecumenical movement, the history of the ecumenical movement itself, the critical examination of the history and principles of the Disciples of Christ as they relate to Christian unity, and a thoughtful examination of problems which confront the Disciples in their participation in further ecumenical life and work. The book gives the reader no feeling that the author is boasting of the Disciples or claiming uncritical acclaim for their accomplishments in the field of Christian unity. An author,

accepting so large an assignment, must select from many facts, events and personal and organizational successes and failures. Dr. Garrison has selected wisely and with faithfulness—letting history speak rather than putting words in its mouth.

The purpose of CHRISTIAN UNITY AND DISCIPLES OF CHRIST is not to glorify the past or claim laurels for yesterday's accomplishments. It is to prepare Disciples to face intelligently and with Christian grace the challenge which the ecumenical movement presents in our time. It is ours now to prove ourselves faithful to our heritage and imaginative and courageous in the face of new opportunity for the achievement of Christian unity. Our ultimate fidelity is not to our particular communion nor is it to our generation in this hour of ecumenical advance—it is to Jesus Christ whose prayer it was that his followers might be one.

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# THE SCROLL

The Journal of the Campbell Institute

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## THE EDITOR'S PAGE

# On Losing One's Faith

*Bert C. Williams*

(Each year the Seniors in Chapman College invite their "favorite Professor" to impart some "words of wisdom" to them on the occasion of their last Convocation as students in Chapman. Dr. Bert C. Williams was invited to address this Convocation in 1956. Below are the provocative words which he set before his senior students.—Ed.)

It is with a great deal of humility that I stand on this platform at the Senior Convocation. I cannot but recall who stood in this place last year on this occasion—Dr. Gay who with his wide range of learning, his catholic spirit, his subtle sense of humor, yes, with his occasional absent-mindedness and professorial eccentricities was for both his students and colleagues *Mr. College Professor*. You of the Senior class, who are responsible for this year's speaker, may have much to answer for—you have been asked to deliver bread and have brought forth a stone, been asked for fish and have produced a serpent. One but hopes for our mutual sakes that even clods and reptiles may be the temporary media for the communication of truth.

In some sense I have to speak for my colleagues of the faculty. Unfortunately they do not all speak with one voice on most crucial matters, and if I were to seek a common denominator in all of our opinions I would find myself uttering universal superficialities. Hence, I must be true to myself and say what I think and feel—trusting that in what I mirror forth my colleagues may catch some glimpse of what they would want to have said in such an hour.

If I were compelled to append a title to my remarks it might be "On Losing One's Faith." Periodically in my own teaching experience I have heard what goes on in academic halls of learning questioned or attacked as endangering or causing students to lose their faith. I'm here to confess that this is true—that there is a conspiracy here and in other free institutions of learning across the world to cause people to lose their faith. Now, on the surface this sounds like a horrible admission—one which in earlier ages would have led the self-appointed guardians of truth to begin gathering the fagots preparatory to staging the immolation scene of another heretic—or in more kindly latter days would bring forth an investigation committee and a loyalty oath or a dismissal notice. But to take this surface view is to miss completely the point that losing one's faith rather regularly is a necessary pre-requisite to growing up. I recall

my own undergraduate years here at Chapman. I lost my faith regularly each year—but always lost it to find it in a full understanding. So it was during five years of graduate school—I got shelled out of trench after trench—but found that this was the means whereby I was able to advance to more adequate knowledge. So it was also in the three years between the end of formal schooling and coming to the staff here. During these crucial years from 1940 to 1943 I lost faith in a vast number of things—including on more than one occasion faith in myself. There were the dark nights of the soul when all cows were black, when one looked before and after and sighed for what was not. Then during the 13 years at Chapman what haven't I lost—rather regularly I have not only lost my faith, but also my temper, my mind, and my shirt. But these experiences of loss have never been just loss—in fact only through losing my faith have I been able to find it. I expect to go on losing my faith until the day I die. Regularly on Sunday mornings I lose my faith—faith that I'm a pretty decent sort of person, faith that I'm always right and the other fellow is wrong, faith that I am indispensable, faith that my denomination, class, race, or nation has all the answers that the rest of the world (lost in sin and error) is expectantly waiting for.

But—unfortunately, at least from my point of view, there are some who see only the lost part of this growth process. They are apparently afraid that in this growth process certain values will be lost. They seem to believe that they have to preserve some faith once for all delivered to the saints. Faith seems to them to be some sacred body of knowledge or emotional fervor that must be “cabined, cribbed, and confined” lest it be lost. But to try to take anything that is dynamic such as a truth-seeking mind or a dedicated spirit and to try to define or protect it by putting it in swaddling clothes is apt to suffocate and destroy what is living and vital in it.

A current version of this fear that I have run into several times this year in connection with our own academic community is that some of our students are losing the “conference spirit.” For the benefit of the non-elect or Philistines among us may I say that the term “conference” refers to a summer camping experience under church auspices for students of high school age. The period provides rich opportunities for learning and fellowship and is often climaxed by an emotive experience of dedication. The resultant high enthusiasm and emotive fervor for high ideals is what is perhaps meant by the “conference spirit.” But if I have learned anything from Psychology it is that our emotional states (especially those of adolescence) are marked by their transiency and impermanence. It is impossible to maintain a constant glow—the vision comes and goes like the sun on a cloudy day. It is seen from various perspectives and not



always with the acute fever-pitch of the initial moment. This experience must be lost—not in the sense of being destroyed—but in being made an ingredient in a greater understanding. Failure to encourage this larger growth is to condemn the student to a perpetual high school adolescent religiosity built on bubbles—bubbles that though beautiful and high-flying have an inherent tendency to fade and die.

I do not know whether we at Chapman College have always lived up to our responsibility in this regard. A letter from the Dean of a graduate school in one of the great universities of the world—a graduate school to which a number of our students have gone—contains this evaluation of those students: “Many of them have commented that while they were at Chapman they appreciated the idea that “Chapman is just like conference all year long.” Now they wish that “Chapman had been like college all year round.” They would appreciate more of a balance between the excellent fellowship and the academic drive. I hope that for your sakes that this criticism is not too true, but I fear that we may be tempted to do more to preserve and encourage excellent fellowship than to preserve and encourage the academic drive.

This leads us on to the consideration of the very purpose and nature of a college. To my way of thinking it is a community of seekers—a community of those devoted not solely to the appreciation and preservation of the past, but dedicated to the discovery of greater truth. It is a community of those who do not believe that *all* truth has been found in *any* area—who refuse to invest any particular statement, book, creed, institution, or person with finality or infallibility. It should be a community of those who are completely dedicated to the best that they know but believe that there is a better-to-be-known in all areas. Persons in such a community should be doubters and sceptics in the sense that they suspend judgment and question all assumptions and conclusions, so that each one will be forced to justify itself before the bar of critical analysis. Now such attitudes are never apt to win friends or to influence people among that segment of society that believes that it has the truth.

The classic example, of course, in this regard was Socrates. Socrates asked questions of those who thought they knew it all and showed them up for the ignoramuses they were. He described his calling as that of a midwife. He looks not after bodies in labor but souls in labor and examines the product which is brought forth to see whether it is “a false idol or a noble and true birth.” In his task of spiritual obstetrics, which he practiced with the instruments of questioning, he found many who thought that they were pregnant with a great conception but who upon examination were found to be troubled with a mere “wind-egg” or, as we should say, many so-called authorities are simply full of hot-air, and it

requires only the pin-prick of a well-chosen question to cut them down to size. But, finally, enough of these punctured authorities were able to get together and to bring a trumped-up case against Socrates. He was accused of atheism and of corrupting the youth, and despite his brilliant self-defense was found guilty and sentenced to death. However, before he left the scene of the trial he made some pertinent remarks about his life:

"Men of Athens, I honor and love you; but I shall obey God rather than you, and while I have life and strength I shall never cease from the practice and teaching of Philosophy, exhorting any one whom I meet . . . I proceed to interrogate and examine and cross-examine him, and if I think he has no virtue in him, but only says that he has, I reproach him with undervaluing the greater and overvaluing the less . . . I am a sort of gadfly, given to the state by God; and the state is a great and noble steed who is tardy in his motions owing to his very size and requires to be stirred into life. I am that gadfly which God has attached to the state, and all day long and in all places am always fastening upon you, arousing and persuading and reproaching you . . . I tell you that to do as you say would be a disobedience to God, and therefore I cannot hold my tongue. Daily to discourse about virtue, and about those other things about which you hear me examining myself and others is the greatest good of man. The unexamined life is not worth living . . . In another world I shall be able to continue my search into true and false knowledge; as in this world so also in the next . . . In another world they do not put a man to death for asking questions: assuredly not."

What a tremendous idea of heaven—a place where inquiry and teaching can go on without any restrictions.

Socrates' life and death was duplicated in many ways four hundred years later by an itinerant religious teacher who even at the age of twelve was found in the seats of learning asking questions, who later in his short ministry because of his analytic ability to cut through to the heart of things was accused of destroying the law and the prophets, and who on his last day of life declared in a Roman court that he had come into the world to bear witness unto the truth. The movement which grew out of the life and message of this itinerant teacher was propagated by a certain Paul of whom it was said "these that have turned the world upside down are come hither also." This Paul had a dynamic conception of truth, suggesting in one of his best-known writings that when he was a child he thought like a child but that when he became a man he put

away childish modes of thought. He himself suggested a critical and experimental approach to knowledge when in a letter he wrote: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." The last book of the writings which describe the first century of this new movement is unfortunately named "Revelation" which suggests some fixed and final word. But study of the book shows that it talks about "a new heaven and a new earth," tells of the passing away of the first heaven and earth along with all former things, and ends with a great voice proclaiming "Behold I make all things new." The Bible and the biblical faith does not end with Revelation—rather it seems to end with Revolution. It ends not with approval of the things which are, but in a doubting, questioning mood that looks forward to drastic growth and change.

One of my favorite persons in the Middle Ages, though never canonized by the Church, is Abelard who daringly in an age that hallowed tradition and revelation, showed no respect for authority. He criticized misstatements in the Bible and questioned the infallibility of the prophets and apostles. He made a compilation of statements drawn from the church fathers showing that they did not agree on many points of the faith. His purpose in this compilation was to incite the questioning attitude among his students. He was not afraid of questions and doubts but openly declared: "For by doubting we come to inquiry, by inquiry we discover the truth."

The father of modern philosophy, René Descartes, was aware of the methodological value of doubt. Descartes started by challenging all the truths accepted by his contemporaries. His doubt was not, however, an end in itself—it was a means, a process of purification, a way of eliminating various falsehoods with the ultimate objective of arriving at unshakable foundations of truth. Thus his method of doubt was a solvent both of rigid dogmatism with its blind acceptance of tradition and authority and also of weak, capricious, and whimsical scepticisms. A type of false intellectual pride that is better described as flaunting, vociferous unbelief. For Descartes' doubt was tentative, provisional, and had the functional purpose of ending in greater and more firmly established knowledge.

The one modern philosopher who has exerted most influence on my own thinking has been Hegel. Those of you who sojourned with me have heard me quote again and again his aphorism, "The true is the whole." For Hegel every point of view is limited. Thought must drive on from any point of view which it assumes or starts with to an opposed point of view so that the relation between them generates a new insight. We must always consider the seriousness of the negative so that we do not



rest content with what is present but see and critically interpret it in terms of what is absent, or omitted, or overlooked, or not yet developed. Truth is not a final result but a dynamic process in which partial insights are not lost or canceled out but are included in a higher, more comprehensive, and richer concept.

Now let's bring this down where you seniors and the rest of us are. As students and teachers in an academic community our primary concern is with growth. But growth is a dangerous process. As Nietzsche has Zarathustra say, "Man is a rope over an abyss. He is a bridge and not a goal. A dangerous crossing, a dangerous wayfaring, a dangerous looking-back, a dangerous trembling and halting." Man as he is is not the end, but a means to a greater end—man as he might be if he is willing to be a creator of new values. But growth means the jeopardizing of certain cherished values for the sake of some greater value which lies ahead, remote and uncertain. Socrates on the day of his execution has no fear of death since he says: "The true philosophers are always occupied in the practice of dying,"—that is they have always been willing to give up, surrender present goods in the quest for more comprehensive and higher goods. Perhaps here is another meaning to the expression used by Christians "taking up the cross." That this process of growth does involve risk, sacrifice, and perhaps suffering—but without risk of present security there can not be realization of greater goodness.

The real tragedy that may occur in any of our lives is not the losing of our faith, not the taking up the cross, not the practice of dying. The real tragedy is *not* to lose our faith, *not* to take up our cross, *not* to practice dying—but to be at ease in Zion, to be satisfied, to be smug and content, to have arrived—to let the good become the enemy of the better and the best, to let the neat conveniences of life block the path to the creative uncertainties, to let the smaller loves stand in the way of the greater love. Of such who have allowed their fear of sacrifice to imprison them Zarathustra laments:

"Alas! there cometh a time when man will no longer launch the arrow of his longing beyond man—and the string of his bow will have unlearned to whizz! I tell you: one must still have chaos in one, to give birth to a dancing star. Alas! There cometh the time of the most despicable man, who can no longer despise himself."

In an address to graduating seniors former President Robert McHutchens of the University of Chicago spoke these words which sum up the real tragedy latent in our lives:

"I am not worried about your economic future. I am worried about your morals. My experience and observation lead me to warn you that

the greatest, the most insidious, the most paralyzing danger you will face is the danger of corruption. Time will corrupt you. Your friends, your wives, or husbands, your business or professional associates will corrupt you; your social, political, and financial ambitions will corrupt you. The worst thing about life is that it is demoralizing. "Getting on" is the great American aspiration. And here the demoralizing part comes in: The way to get on is to be "safe", to be "sound", to be agreeable, to be inoffensive, to have no views on important matters not sanctioned by the majority, by your superiors, or by your group. Do not let "practical" men tell you that you should surrender your ideals because they are impractical. If, come what may, you hold them fast, you will do honor to yourself, and to your college, and you will serve your country."

So our one word more to you graduating seniors as well as to us who remain is that we cultivate and retain the fine art of losing our faith, that we do not seek to perpetuate childishness or adolescence in any area of life, but that we grow continually into a fuller maturity. That we reject finality and infallibility in all areas and seek ever for greater truths. That like Socrates we practice spiritual obstetrics on those who claim that they have knowledge to see whether they are pregnant with a great conception or whether they are only gas bags full of hot air. Like Socrates let's be gadflies and attach ourselves to our churches, schools, unions, professional societies, political parties, social organizations, legislative bodies and sting them by our questions into awareness of what they ought to be doing. May we be found not only in the academic halls, but in the temples, shops, offices, legislative chambers, and homes asking questions—seeking out of loyalty to an ideal of fuller truth to set a world right side up. May we with Abelard and Descartes discover the methodological value of doubt which leads to inquiry and fuller knowledge. With Hegel may we discover the seriousness of the negative and look upon questions, differences, and doubts as a challenge that there is more to be learned than we or anyone else yet knows. Let's be willing to commit ourselves to the dangerous and risky business of surpassing the good values that we know in search of the better and the best. Let's retain the creative chaos within us, the divine discontent that leads us to despise our little selves. Let us give birth to a dancing star.

# An Excerpt From "Fifty Years Of Attack And Controversy"

*Stephen J. Corey*

THE CAMPBELL INSTITUTE

During this period, early in the century, J. W. McGarvey, President of the College of the Bible of Lexington, Kentucky, was a regular contributor to the CHRISTIAN STANDARD. He conducted a department of biblical criticism. He was a recognized scholar and an outstanding teacher but was very conservative in his personal views. He became quite vitriolic in the recurring attacks on this regular weekly page of his in the CHRISTIAN STANDARD with anyone disagreeing in the least with the more conservative view in theology. President McGarvey was opposed to instrumental music in the churches, as were many of the earlier leaders of our churches, but did not make this view a point of contention. He had left the Broadway Christian Church of Lexington, Kentucky, when the organ was introduced in the church worship and had joined the Chestnut Street Church of that city ("Brother McGarvey" by W. C. Morro, p. 223).

During this period, Professor McGarvey and the CHRISTIAN STANDARD discovered that there was an organization of ministers among the Disciples of Christ called the "Campbell Institute." This was a small group of young men who had gone beyond the college course and the biblical training provided for Disciples and had taken university graduate and seminary studies. At that time our Bible Colleges did not offer what is now termed graduate work. That is, the ministerial course was combined with college instruction. There was no plan to take students beyond college graduation into studies for graduate degrees like the Master of Arts or the Bachelor of Divinity. Therefore, quite a number of Disciples, feeling the need of further training, availed themselves of graduate studies in other ministerial training centers, such as Yale, Harvard, Union, Rochester, Chicago, and Princeton, where a three year seminary course was offered.

There was quite a group of these men in the early years. The number included Henry Lawrence Atkinson, Edward Scribener Ames, Miner Lee Bates, Levi S. Batman, Jesse C. Caldwell, Hall L. Calhoun, George A. Campbell, A. L. Chapman, Stephen E. Corey, Edgar F. Daugherty, G. D. Edwards, James Egbert, Edwin R. Errett, John Ray Ewers, A. W. Fortune, Charles A. Freer, W. E. Garrison, John Parish Givens, J. H.



Goldner, T. J. Golightly, F. F. Grim, Edward A. Henry, Austin Hunter, Burris Jenkins, Frederick D. Kershner, Clinton Lockhart, Levi Marshall, George A. Miller, Raphael H. Miller, Herbert Moninger, E. E. Moorman, W. C. Morro, William Oeschger, Wallace C. Payne, Allan B. Philputt, James M. Philputt, Perry O. Powell, H. O. Pritchard, Perry J. Rice, Henry Barton Robison, W. F. Rothenburger, Carlos C. Rowilson, Joseph A. Serena, Harry D. Smith, E. E. Snoddy, Alva W. Taylor, Hiram Van Kirk, Baxter Waters, Charles M. Watson, L. N. D. Wells, Herbert L. Willett, Charles A. Young, and many others later on.

A small group had been formed for mutual help, extension of reading and fellowship. That was in 1896 at Springfield, Illinois. The group of 14 charter members, two of whom are still living, was named the Campbell Institute. It was a free assembly where the members felt unconstrained. Intellectual and theological issues were discussed with complete freedom. It was a helpful society of mutual understanding. Some of the men were quite liberal in their views, others were very conservative. This made no difference in the fellowship of the group. The Campbell Institute meetings were as free as the air in their open discussion.

In an issue of the CHRISTIAN STANDARD (November 10, 1906, p. 1697), President McGarvey wrote an attack on the Campbell Institute and its monthly magazine called THE SCROLL (successor to THE QUARTERLY BULLETIN OF THE CAMPBELL INSTITUTE), published by the Institute, beginning in September, 1906. In the attack, on his page of "Biblical Criticism" he said that writers of THE SCROLL were "inspired by the three evil spirits of evolution, higher criticism and the new theology." Adverse discussion of evolution and higher criticism was quite popular then.

An interesting incident occurred in connection with this attack by President McGarvey. Aside from his page of "Biblical Criticism", with numerous attacks on the Institute, the Christian Standard had editorials excoriating this so-called "high-brow" group. Before publishing one of Mr. Garvey's denunciations, (Nov. 24, 1906, p. 1775) the CHRISTIAN STANDARD sent the column proof to the members of the Campbell Institute whose names it had secured. In this connection, a covering letter from Russell Errett for the STANDARD stated that if any members of the Institute at that time wished to resign from the group, the magazine would not mention their names in the list which it was about to publish.

I became a member of the Campbell Institute in 1904 (THE QUARTERLY BULLETIN OF THE CAMPBELL INSTITUTE, January 1, 1905, p. 6), following my graduation from the theological seminary of Rochester, New York. Along with the other members, I received the

surprising note from the STANDARD. One can imagine the reaction that this produced. It was a serious matter for some of the members.

It happened that Herbert Moninger, who was employed by the Standard Publishing Co. for several years as its leading Sunday School authority (he began work for the Standard Publishing Co. on July 1, 1911 and remained in its employ until his death, shortly after he was 35 years old, on June 21, 1911—see CHRISTIAN STANDARD, July 1, 1911, p. 1052 and July 15, 1911, p. 1124) was one of the most devoted members of this group (see membership roster in THE QUARTERLY BULLETIN OF THE CAMPBELL INSTITUTE, October 1, 1903, p. 7; also October 1, 1905, p. 11). He was requested to resign. He regretted this very much and in a private conversation with me made the statement that he thought the storm would soon blow over and when it did he would be glad to have fellowship with the helpful group again.

The attack upon the Campbell Institute not only continued with unabated zeal, for some time, but curiously enough, many times through the nearly fifty years since it has been held up to view by the CHRISTIAN STANDARD as one of the main reasons for division among the Disciples of Christ. The paper has constantly claimed the members have attempted to dominate our missionary organizations, colleges, International Convention, and all the cooperative work that we have. The often reiterated claim that the Campbell Institute has tried to divert our Brotherhood from its main genius apparently has been an obsession with this periodical. Of course, the Campbell Institute flourished under this sort of opposition and a large number of our leaders joined its ranks. Indeed, the present membership is around six hundred.

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(The excerpt above was taken from the work of the Committee on Publication of the Corey Manuscript, which was published by the Bethany Press. The Christian Board of Publication has given THE SCROLL permission to reprint this excerpt, *en toto*. This quoted material comes from the chapter on "The Beginning of Controversy, 1900-1910," and the quotes come from pp. 16-19.—Ed.)

# What Disciples Have Meant By 'The Unity We Seek'

A. T. DeGroot, Fort Worth, Texas

A review of the specifications Disciples have written (some of them even accompanied by blue prints!) on the nature of the unity we seek for the church would be a panorama revealing various emphases. The resulting variety of practices would startle many complacent Disciples, showing such things as uniform pastors' salaries and other elements of a strict Presbyterianism in our British churches, closed communion, ministers wearing the Roman collar, foot washing, an organized order of Sisters, and even a Bishop as robust as any Methodist. The range of basic ideas runs between two extremes both of which struggled for priority in the mind of Thomas Campbell, and both of which, contradictory in nature, peer out from the pages of the *Declaration and Address*. In one place he says we

shall reduce to practice that whole form of doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, expressly revealed and enjoined in the word of God.<sup>1</sup>

In another he delineates the sinners' way of salvation (which, of course, must express much of the very nature of the church) as

a profession of their faith in, and obedience to Him (Jesus) in all things according to his word, is all that is absolutely necessary to qualify them for admission into His church.

Descended from the first idea is our whole history of pattern-seeking in the New Testament, which has left as many divisions as there are different patterns. Descended from the second idea is the strain of thought which has always commanded the allegiance of the majority of our people from the beginnings to the present. Thomas Campbell's heart and instinct were superior to his tentative theory of constitutional ecclesiastical law. This is not surprising to us today when we remember that his generation was bound by certain preconceptions about the nature of the Bible which no longer generally prevail. As F. D. Kershner said,

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Campbell's mind here tentatively contemplated that a definite and fixed pattern of the church should be found in the New Testament. The *Declaration and Address* speaks of "the original pattern laid down in the New Testament." He adds, "The New Testament is as perfect a constitution for the worship, discipline, and government of the New Testament church, and as perfect a rule for the particular duties of its members, as the Old Testament was for the worship, discipline and government of the Old Testament church and the particular duties of its members."



"Christian unity is not as easy a proposition as it appeared to Thomas Campbell."<sup>2</sup>

The position reached in time by our first generation founding fathers is summarized in a statement by Lancelot Oliver, one of our British editors:

"We have never held that a return to New Testament Christianity *and acceptance of what we think constitutes it*, are necessarily one and the same thing; and at needed moments the fact has been recalled that we must ever be ready to diminish or enlarge, as further truth breaks forth from God's word."<sup>3</sup>

For, the key word in "The Nature of the Unity We Seek" is *We*. Disciples are not the *We*. The central insight of our historic movement is one which gives a new and current import to the old but largely undeveloped principle of the Protestant Reformation: the priesthood of all believers. A "profession of *their* faith" is to be controlled by "his word," but it is still *their* faith, and the only test is honesty, not agreement.<sup>4</sup> The church we seek must be as wide in its fellowship as the sincere minds of honest men travel in their earnest study of the scriptures. The insight and message of the *Declaration and Address* has been summarized in these words:

"Thomas Campbell . . . appeals from the ecclesiastical decisions of popes and cardinals to what he considers the more certain infallibility of the common mind as the latter is found embodied in the Christian thought of the church membership as a whole . . . The only test of truth is its universal acceptance by right thinking people everywhere . . . The common mind, the universal reason, is not always incarnate in the prejudiced and turbulent mass of humanity. It is, however, always present in the thoughtful consensus of the majority of intelligent, candid, and honest seekers after truth."<sup>5</sup>

Here is a grand conception of the path to agreement in the essentials of Christian work and worship. Mr. Campbell glimpsed it in some measure and sketched its outlines hazily. It remains for his spiritual children to explore further the truths that may be found as the common mind of the worldwide church discloses what is vital and what is merely curious and local in expressing the program of Christianity.

2 *The Christian Union Overture* (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1923), p. 30.

3 *Bible Advocate*, May 6, 1910. Italics added.

4 See "An Original Rift," by W. B. Blakemore, *The Scroll*, January, 1950.

5 *The Christian Union Overture*, p. 101.

Upon this basis historic theological creeds become interesting expressions of opinion, but not standards of church membership. Alexander Campbell succinctly stated the Disciple position by saying that "nothing that was not as old as the New Testament should be made an article of faith, a rule of practice, or a term of communion amongst Christians."<sup>6</sup> Simple common sense reveals that the shore line of history is littered with the wrecks of abandoned creeds.<sup>7</sup> Barton W. Stone summarized the problem of creed and freedom by declaring:

Have we not always had in our church, Calvinists, Armenians, Trinitarians and Unitarians? Have we by such union agreed to receive all their errors? No. In the great leading principles, or facts of the New Testament we agree, and cheerfully let each other have his opinions, as private property.<sup>8</sup>

However, lack of creed does not mean any lack of perception of the living-ness of the church. The "we" requires a living church. Here Disciples stand over against most of the Protestant world and close to the Catholic family. The Protestant Reformation's salvation *sola fide*<sup>9</sup> reached its extreme expression in the group from which Alexander Campbell withdrew, the Baptists, who taught that baptism had no function in salvation but was for those who had already been saved outside of the church. The living church of baptized believers, both young and mature, designates and thus authorizes capable members to function as evangelists, conductors of worship,<sup>10</sup> and servants in the family fellowship of aid.<sup>11</sup>

6 **Christian Baptist**, II, 2. September 6, 1824, p. 14.

7 As Froude, the historian, said, "If medicine had been regulated three hundred years ago by Act of Parliament: if there had been 39 articles of Physic and every licensed practitioner had been compelled under pains and penalties to compound his drugs by the prescriptions of Henry the Eighth's physician, Dr. Butts, it is easy to conjecture in what state of health the people of this country would at present be found." (Quoted in Leslie D. Weatherhead, **This is the Victory**.)

8 **Christian Messenger**, 1833, Vol. VII, p. 6.

9 See "A Response to Lund," by the Disciple Faith and Order Committee (Gresham, England, Garrison, Lindley, Short, Osborn), **Shane Quarterly**, July, 1953, p. 93.

10 See statement by W. Robinson that the Lord's Supper is "a rite **within the Church**." Faith and Order pamphlet No. 99, **Rules and Customs of Churches concerning Intercommunion and Open Communion**, 1944, pp. 33-36.

11 This ethical emphasis was central in Barton W. Stone's concern. W. G. West says, "With Alexander Campbell, Christian unity would be the culmination of a primitive gospel plan in history which would find its epic expression in the introduction of the Millennium; with Barton W. Stone, Christian unity would be the fulfillment of Christian trust, love, and concession, based on a Sermon-on-the-Mount type of primitive Gospel which is actually expressed in every present moment of time. With Campbell, certain doctrines of the apostolic church could be arranged, in what today may be termed 'jig-saw puzzle' fashion, to form the basis of unity. For Stone, the spirit of love manifested by Jesus and his early disciples must underlie any attempts to lay foundations for the unity of the Christian community." **Barton Warren Stone: Early American Advocate of Christian Unity**, (Nashville: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1954), p. 176.

As a negative illustration of this principle of the common priesthood of informed seekers, the fact that the "we" of the centuries have found adequate authority in the scriptures to employ various church government forms precludes a covert method of making only one of them, episcopacy, mandatory by designating it as the end product from such a scheme as the South India United Church.<sup>12</sup>

As a positive illustration of the common priesthood in thought and action, it is possible to declare the common ground of the mind of the church on baptism. The immersion of a penitent believer in water in the name of the Trinity for remission of sins is everywhere accepted as valid baptism. It is when we practice what the "we" of the centuries have discovered that the unity of the church is advanced. As C. C. Morrison has shown in *The Unfinished Reformation*, it is only when individual denominations deny the common mind of the church and arrogate to themselves peculiar practices which are not universally accepted, and make these binding on others, that unity is lost.<sup>13</sup>

The unquestioned element in our subject is that the Disciples do seek unity. Our cause was born for this purpose. Peter Ainslie truly represented the heart and conscience of our people when his best known book by its title called division *The Scandal of Christianity*.<sup>14</sup> But our fathers and the majority of their spiritual descendants have never sought this unity in isolation.<sup>15</sup> Ours is a movement within the church; its very genius is to rejoice that "we" includes the whole of the family of God from Pentecost to the present as it seeks oneness in faith and order.

12 See W. E. Garrison, *Christian Unity and Disciples of Christ* (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1955), especially pp. 245-250. Few Disciples would agree with C. C. Morrison that South India represents an "inspiring achievement" which, if extended to the whole of protestantism would eradicate the "impasse caused by the rigorous absolutism of both sides . . . without violation of conscience on either side." *The Unfinished Reformation* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1953), p. 166.

13 See Chapter III, "The Churchism of a Denomination."

14 Chicago: Willett, 1929.

15 Isolationists, or those who assume that the search for truth has ended in their present findings, have quite logically withdrawn and set up separate church bodies which have no fellowship with the rest of the Christian world—or with each other! See Earl Ervin West, *The Search for the Ancient Order* (2 volumes) and, A. T. DeGroot, *Church of Christ Number Two*, (Birmingham, England, 1956).



# P.S. To A Famous Letter

*W. B. Blakemore, Chicago, Illinois*

In 1933 Edward Scribener Ames wrote a famous letter to God. I am going to presume to add a postscript to this letter after quoting its first paragraph:

“Dear God:

The idea of writing this letter occurred to me one day some time ago as I was walking down an avenue of our city. It was at a corner where a large new Christian Science church is being built just across from a little United Presbyterian church. Seeing this fine spacious temple over against the modest chapel which I had been passing for so many years, set me thinking. I said to myself, this new place is a symbol of peace and quiet. It will minister to nervous, troubled souls. Its charm will not be in its doctrine, but in the attitude it invites. It will be like a restful cathedral, but it will not be so dark. It will not be like a lecture-hall, for there will not be any discussion or debate. The whole place is to embody peace and harmony and to radiate a sense of calm assurance. The other church across the way represents a much older denomination. Its compact little building has long symbolized to me a deep faith, somewhat austere and remote, but heroic and red-blooded. That faith never blinked at any of the facts of sin or evil in our old world, and yet it comforted many hearts and lifted them out of sore trouble. I think one reason that church has not grown much is because its people never use anything but the psalms in their services and, like some other churches, are very strict about the observance of the “Sabbath.” It is interesting to see how human beings are influenced by the general appearance and drift of affairs in this life. Here is one building new and light and with an air of success and comfort. It reflects a spirit of confidence and of self-satisfaction, superior to remorse and suffering, but in the other just across the street there are sharp contrasts of light and shadow—the deep darkness of Gethsemane and Golgatha, making a background for the glorious dawn of Easter. There are found all the tragic things of life, softened by a great hope for the future. The inscrutable and measureless mysteries of human nature and of divine grace make a profound and intricate labyrinth, in relation to which the transparent and comprehensive faith of Christian Science seems singularly smooth and full of ease. It was this contrast which made me think of writing this letter.

Sometimes such perplexities are almost overwhelming. I walk about among men and look at the things they do, and go home wondering, not infrequently worried and tormented in my soul to know what it is all about and how one should live in a world like this. At such time I long to talk it over with some one who understands, with some one who has great sympathy and patience and who looked at the spectacle much longer and in many more ways than I am able to do. That is the reason I decided to write the letter to you. I always think of you as one who understands and who has marvelous patience."

Here is a P.S.:

"1956

Dear God:

You may be interested to know what has happened to those two churches. The section of town in which they stand is now largely populated by colored people. The two churches have met the problem in very different ways.

Some months ago the Presbyterian Church sought to become integrated. The colored people of the community found it difficult to believe that the white congregation was serious and sincere. Then the white congregation decided to find a new minister. They sought among the colored brethren until they found a very fine man who has taken on the leadership of their church. The people of the neighborhood are now convinced of the sincerity of the white congregation and the Presbyterian Church has become a fine example of an integrated congregation.

The Christian Science Church has become the Temple of John the Baptist."

# Annuities: An Early Example

*John Long, Orange, California*

In these days when our church colleges and other agencies are wisely stressing the advantages of annuities as a means of continuing these causes, it might be interesting and helpful to recall the example of one of the great pioneers of our faith whose record ought occasionally to be held before us.

Letitia Hutchings was born November 29, 1819 at Virgil, Cortland County, New York. In May, 1847, she married a promising Disciple minister, Randal Faurot. Their early interest in the value of education was shown by their starting the Newville Academy while he was pastor of the Christian Church at Newville, Indiana. A similar academy was started later when they moved to St. Louis, Michigan. They each taught for several years in each institution.

In the meantime there had been an exciting three years in the South while Randal Faurot was a Chaplain in the Army of the Tennessee. Mrs. Faurot joined her husband while he was stationed at Nashville and at Murfreesboro. Being moved to do something about the Negro camp followers, Chaplain Faurot and his wife began an educational program among Negroes which remained a life-long concern. Their efforts were sufficiently successful to attract the attention of other church leaders, so that in 1875 they were given \$100 by Ovid Butler of Indianapolis and told to survey the situation in Mississippi and report what could be done to locate a school there.

In a small cabin in Jackson, Mississippi they began an elementary school for the recently freed people, a work which this pioneer woman, against great opposition, continued to operate alone after her husband agreed to serve for a term as President of Alcorn College, the new state school for Negroes south of Jackson.

The continued concern of several Brotherhood leaders resulted in the purchase of the Mt. Beulah Plantation near Edwards, Mississippi, and in the summer of 1882 the Faurots were asked to get in readiness the four rooms of the old plantation "mansion" to serve as home for themselves and two other teachers, and as a school and dormitories for students. October 14 was announced as the opening date for the Southern Christian Institute, but on October 10, 1882, weakened by the arduous weeks of preparation and a five-day siege of malaria, the first president died.



Letitia Faurot, an invalid all her life, again demonstrated why she should be listed among our honored great leaders. She remained at the task, and with the help of two young women opened school almost on schedule. Failing health forced her retirement from the work after two years there, but her influence for good continued to remain through the years ahead.

In response to a request from C. C. Smith, Secretary of Negro Education under the American Christian Missionary Society, Mrs. Faurot wrote a letter early in 1900 modestly explaining her part in the early history of the Southern Christian Institute. She disclosed that except for the \$100 given to them by Ovid Butler, founder of Butler University, and \$500 paid by the Christian Women's Board of Missions, the Faurots had no other financial support in the work. When the actual school was started at Edwards she received a salary of \$15 a month. And yet when she was paid \$1000 as insurance upon the death of her husband, she turned over the entire amount for the use of our Brotherhood for Negro education.

In her letter she states simply: "I lent the institution \$1000 insurance on my husband's life, to be theirs at my death, on condition that they would pay me \$50 a year. This condition has been most sacredly kept; and some of my friends, as well as myself, have been made to feel that it is, in many respects, the best way to invest money for old age."

She does not call her investment an annuity. Maybe the term was not much used in her day. But the idea is the same: She felt the need for this vital work by the church; she invested her limited funds to help meet that need; she received a safe return of 5% interest on her investment for the rest of her life; upon her death the full amount of the \$1000 went directly into continuing the work which she considered so important. She might even have considered it a shrewd investment in that had she lived one year longer she would have received in returns a total equaling the amount of her original \$1000. Actually, of course, she received only a generous portion of the interest which her investment had earned, and the original remained intact to continue doing the work for which it was intended..

Letitia Faurot expressed her stewardship in a further way. In a memorial article concerning her in the *Christian Standard* for January 11, 1902, C. C. Smith quotes her endorsement of the annuity plan and adds: "Nearly every year since my connection with the work she has returned to me \$5 out of the \$50, which was nearly her earthly all." It would not be difficult to believe that when this tithe of \$5 came into the Kingdom's

treasury Jesus said much the same thing as he once said when another poor widow out of her penury and need gave all that she had.

What can we do to increase her tribe? The needs for advancing and continuing our church colleges and other causes are just as great today as they ever were. Our Christian colleges and most other agencies of our Brotherhood have provisions for administering annuity agreements whereby people of all ages, with large funds or small, can draw generous returns on their investments, and have the assurance that their money will continue their good influence years beyond their earthly days.

Those of us who are so greatly indebted to our church colleges, (and who among us is not?) need to give greater publicity to such opportunities for investing in a better future, and to encourage more people to share and increase the faith and influence of great pioneers like Letitia Hutchings Faurot.

# The Editor's Page

## *Contributors to This Issue*

*Bert C. Williams* is Professor of Philosophy and Head of the Area of Appreciation in Chapman College, Orange, California. In spite of his relative youth, Dr. Williams is the oldest member of the Chapman College faculty in terms of tenure with the college. If you would like to get a good picture of Bert Williams' real place on the campus, please consult the January issue of *THE WORLD CALL*. His picture (along with a good-looking blond) is on the cover of this issue of *THE WORLD CALL*. More about his position and teaching in the appropriate spot inside the issue.

*Stephen J. Corey* is one of our most beloved and indefatigable workers and writers among the Disciples of Christ. He has served in many positions of high importance, and he has also carried out onerous duties of lowly consequences. Always he discharges his obligations as a Christian statesman. He was President of the College of the Bible (Lexington, Kentucky) from 1938 to 1945, and is now President Emeritus. Currently, Stephen Corey is living in Santa Monica, California, which he uses as a base for his continued career of writing and speaking.

*A. T. DeGroot* is presently Dean of Brite College of the Bible, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth (pardon the expression!) Texas. He is probably best known among the Disciples, as well as other religious denominations, for his work as a historian in religious thought and development. He and W. E. Garrison are probably the foremost historians of Discipliana.

*W. Barnett Blakemore* is the Dean of the Disciples Divinity House at the University of Chicago. Dean Blakemore assumed this position upon the retirement of E. S. Ames in 1945. Dean Blakemore is well-known among Disciples as a frequent speaker at various types of religious gatherings and as a frequent contributor to Disciple journals.

*John Long*, Chapman College, Orange, California, was for thirty years associated with the Southern Christian Institute as Dean and President. Currently he is Head of the Area of Communication in Chapman College.



## *Editorial Meanderings*

*A NEW EDITOR.* This is the first publication of *THE SCROLL* under the editorship of W. Marshon DePoister.

If the Comrades of the Institute will assist me at every turn, this is going to be a most interesting task. It is quite a thrill and honor to follow in train of the editorship of *THE SCROLL* of such persons as Herbert L. Willett, W. E. Garrison, John Davis, E. S. Ames, and W. B. Blake-more. I must confess that I do not approach this new responsibility with "fear and trembling," for this is not (unfortunately!) a part of my make-up. I do, however, seek to fulfill my duties with a profound sense of humility. There is always a tremendous responsibility which must be assumed by one who is the purveyor of ideas and thoughts. One never knows the extent to which an idea may be carried in the mind of a reader or listener. The extent can never be measured. It is mandatory, therefore, that one gauge well, insofar as possible, the implications of words which appear in a journal for which he is responsible. I shall attempt to do this within the limits of my own abilities and assisted by the advice and counsel of the Publication Committee of the Campbell Institute, and with also the wisdom which comes to me from members of the Institute.

You will note that this current issue of *THE SCROLL* is relatively short. There is a reason for this. I assumed this position at the International Convention in Des Moines, Iowa, and there has been little time to compile adequate material for a longer issue. It occurred to me that a shorter issue with good and stimulating articles is better than a longer issue with "padded material." As always, *THE SCROLL* will be dependent upon its friends. Please, please, please, send me your articles! You know full well that no editor is able to publish everything which comes to him; but I can assure everyone that ALL contributions will receive thoughtful consideration, and every contributor will be notified that his contribution has been received.

*NEW OFFICERS.* Please note the new officers of the Campbell Institute. You will see their names listed on the back page of *THE SCROLL* of this and every issue. The only carry-over from the old slate of officers is J. J. Boskirk. It was felt that Joe probably had the books in such shape that only *he* could make sense out of them, so he was left in the position he has so faithfully and efficiently held for several years. You might like to drop a note to these officers, new and old, and tell them of your continuing loyalty to the Institute and of your happiness in their leadership.

*A PLEA.* Any idea worth its salt is very likely to be mildly to highly

controversial. The Institute has thrived on *intelligent* controversy! Observe the article in this issue on "Fifty Years of Attack and Controversy"! As the editor, I patiently and earnestly seek materials from every quarter of Disciplesdom. Do you have an intelligent "pet peeve?" If you do, let's air it in THE SCROLL! Have you discovered a "new approach" to a problem? By all means share your new-found knowledge with the rest of us! Send something; send everything! We all want to know what the rest of us think about religious, social, ethical, and political problems of our time.

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The Campbell Institute, founded in 1896, is an association for ministers and laymen of the Disciples of Christ for the encouragement of scholarship, comradeship, and intelligent discipleship.

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# THE SCROLL

The Journal of the Campbell Institute

## DEFINING THE UNITY WE SEEK

Ronald E. Osborn

## ANOTHER GOAL FOR OUR TEN YEAR PROGRAM OF ADVANCE

George J. Beazley, Jr.

## OUR ECUMENICAL DILEMMA

W. B. Blakemore

## WHAT GOOD IS THE CAMPBELL INSTITUTE?

Replies to Editor's Query

## DO RELIGION AND EDUCATION MIX?

W. Marshon DePoister

# Defining The Unity We Seek

*Ronald E. Osborn, Indianapolis, Indiana*

As Disciples of Christ we have been preaching on Christian unity for a hundred and fifty years. For half a century, the ecumenical movement has been giving the subject increasing attention. Few of us have exercised much precision in the use of the term. Indeed, we may well imagine that when we have preached so fervently on this ideal, the minds of our hearers have been even foggier than our own. (It is possible to imagine an impossibility!) We are in worse shape than Jeremiah. In his days the false prophets cried, "Peace, peace," when there was no peace. But people at least knew what was not. Today the true prophets—ourselves and those who think like us—are crying, "Unity, unity." But we are not quite clear just what we do mean by that blessed word.

Since 1927, the Faith and Order movement has been concerned to study questions of doctrine, sacramental practice, ministry, worship, and the like as these affect division and unity among Christians. World conferences on these important sections of the World Council assemblies at Amsterdam in 1948 and Evanston in 1954 also considered Faith and Order themes. More recently, regional Faith and Order conferences have been held in India and Australia, to deal with specific concerns of those areas. And now a North American Study Conference on Faith and Order is scheduled for Oberlin, Ohio, September 3 to 10 of this year.

At Oberlin a Faith and Order conference will attempt for the first time, in my knowledge, to define what we mean by Christian unity. As is well known, the theme will be "The Nature of the Unity We Seek"—in this case being the churches of the United States and Canada. What do we mean by this Christian unity for which we are constantly pleading, in ultimate theological terms? In practical everyday expression? Oberlin's function must be something like that of Shakespeare's poet:

The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,  
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;  
And as imagination bodies forth  
the forms of things unknown, the poet's pen  
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name.

If we are inclined to speak disparagingly of ecumaniacs, let us recall how near the delusions of the lunatic may be to inspiration of the genius;

but let us implore for those who go to Oberlin an infusion of true inspiration, whether of the lover or of the poet. For if Oberlin can enable the churches of the United States and Canada to look both at earth and heaven and to transform our thinking about Christian unity from airy nothing into living reality with a local habitation and a name, it will be well worth while.

## I

The North American Faith and Order Study Conference is jointly sponsored by the United States Conference for the World Council of Churches, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., and the Canadian Council of Churches. Dr. Samuel McCrea Cavert is executive secretary, and Professor Paul Minear of Yale Divinity School is study secretary.

Four hundred delegates will represent the churches which constitute the National Council and the Canadian Council, as well as some churches which do not hold membership in these bodies. The Committee on Arrangements has sought to make Oberlin far more representative than any previous ecumenical gathering in America has been, and invitations have gone to churches, which ordinarily remain aloof from such affairs, to be represented by regular delegates, by observers, or by unofficial observers. It is likely that in one capacity or other there will be at Oberlin, some persons from the Church of God, some Southern Baptists, and members of other communions who have not previously taken part in Faith and Order conferences. It is hoped that denominational delegations will include local pastors, administrators, theologians, laymen, women, and youth.

On the basis of total membership, Disciples of Christ in the United States are entitled to twelve delegates, who have been appointed by the International Convention. Three are pastors: Hampton Adams, chairman of the delegation, John Paul Pack, and R. Frederick West. One is an administrator, Robert Nelson of the Division of World Mission, UCMS. Six are professors in theological seminaries: Robert Tobias of the School of Religion at Butler University, Howard E. Short of the College of the Bible, W. B. Blakemore of the Disciples Divinity House, Dean John McCaw of Drake Divinity School, Stephen J. England of the Graduate Seminary at Phillips, and A. T. DeGroot of Brite College of the Bible. One is a layman: Professor Hal Gulley of the University of Illinois. One is a woman: Mrs. George Earl Owen of Indianapolis.

Twelve delegates are not very many from a brotherhood with such a concern for Christian unity as ours. But twelve is all we get from the whole country. Besides these, we shall have two delegates from Canada



and presumably one from Mexico. And we must recognize that every community represented at Oberlin has had difficulty similar to our own in selecting out of the many who are concerned the few who can go.

Besides the delegates there will be about two hundred consultants, chosen from some special contribution which it is felt that they can make to the conference. Only about half of these have been appointed, and all so far on an *ex officio* basis. Two are Disciples: Perry E. Gresham of Bethany College, an American member of the Faith and Order Working Committee, and Ronald E. Osborn, a member of the Committee on Arrangements.

There will be no visitor's program for Oberlin as there was for Evanston. The conference will not be a public spectacle, but an occasion for study. Even the number of plenary sessions will be limited; for the most part delegates and consultants will be hard at work in twelve study sections. One of the unfortunate aspects of the ecumenical movement is that any of the great conferences, which generates so much interest and attention, can accommodate relatively so few persons if it is to be at all manageable and to provide any opportunity for personal give-and-take among the delegates.

What then are the issues to which Oberlin will address itself? The discussions will fall into three major divisions: (1). What is the nature of that unity which the churches should seek today in North America in faithfulness to the eternal gospel? (2) What is the nature of the unity we seek in terms of organizational structures? (3) What is the nature of the unity we should be seeking in view of cultural pressures? The work of each division will be subdivided among four sections. That makes twelve sections in all, with one U.S. Disciple in each.

Let me present each division in turn, indicating the topics of each of its sections, and trying to suggest an important issue for Disciples in the considerations of each division.

## II

Division I will consider *the Nature of the Unity we Seek in Faithfulness to The Eternal Gospel*. Its first section will give attention to "Imperatives and Motivations."

A second section will discuss "Doctrinal Concensus and Conflict."

Section three will consider, for the first time in more than thirty years of Faith and Order conferences, "Baptism into Christ." Our lone Disciple delegate to that section will join with others present in the investigation.

Section four will devote attention to "The Table of Our Lord."

Local study committees in Seattle, San Francisco, Saskatoon, Minneapolis, Austin, and Newark have done preparatory work for this division. Jack Finegan, Forrest Richeson, John Paul Pack, John Barclay, and Joe W. Bailey have shared in their studies.

Each of the four sections will be dealing with issues which clamor for our attention. I have elected to discuss briefly the topic which most Disciples would doubtless select. I have chosen it, however, not because we are so well prepared to deal with it, but because we are so poorly prepared. The issue, of course, is baptism. Disciples always get around to that!

For a century and a half Disciples have been pleading with the rest of the Christian world to take the doctrine of baptism seriously, and Baptists have been at it longer than that. Now biblical theologians, both in Europe and in America, are giving renewed attention to it. But the ecumenical interest in this sacrament does not coincide with our historic concerns about it. Oberlin will be pressing for a new understanding of the one baptism as a bond of union among Christians. Must we not say in all honesty that baptism, as we have been constrained to preach it, has been rather an occasion of division? What, for example, are Disciples prepared to say concerning the following objectives of the study?—

to listen together to Scripture for its teaching concerning power of baptism to unify God's people.

to determine the degree to which the various communions now recognize as valid the baptism and confirmation of other communions.

to weigh the implications of this recognition in dealing with other obstacles to unity.

It is no secret, I suppose, that the pressure to consider baptism has come from Baptists and Disciples, but from earnest theologians in the classical Reformed tradition who see here a possible avenue through the impasse respecting intercommunion. If we all have received one baptism into Christ, why cannot we all be gathered about one table? And what have Disciples, in terms of our traditional emphasis, to say to this question? Surely not a word that will commend itself to serious ecumenical theologians. We have boasted in ecumenical circles about our practice of open communion: "The table is not ours, but the Lord's." Yet our basis for open communion is pretty weak—"Let each man examine himself"—involving a subjectivism out of harmony with our

usual principles of objectivity and not likely to commend itself to serious contemporary theologians. The only valid basis for admitting persons to the Lord's table is the recognition that they have been baptized into Christ. But do Disciples recognize that other Christians have been baptized? Not really. If we hold to the traditional position of our majority we have no sound theological basis for open communion and nothing constructive to say at Oberlin respecting baptism as a means to unity. In terms of our traditional position, our only possible line is to persuade all other Christians that they need to be immersed. Whatever Alexander Campbell could or could not do, I am convinced that we do not have a scholar among us who can go to Oberlin and convince the other delegates there that they and the Christians they represent have not been baptized into Christ. And I am convinced that we ourselves do not believe that they are outside of Him. Else we would never admit them to the Lord's table, even though we do say it is his and not ours. Our practice has been sound, as far as it has gone, even though our theory has been deficient. As in numerous other instances among the Disciples, what we actually do is much sounder than what we think we do or the reasons why we think we do it!

Thus our witness at Oberlin may become a constructive rather than an obstructive word. And Oberlin will not have been in vain if it stimulates Disciples to work out a consistent theology of baptism in its implications for Christian unity.

### III

The second major division at Oberlin will consider *the Nature of the Unity We Seek in Terms of Organizational Structures*. Here is the division where those who speak of Christian unity must give to this airy nothing a local habitation and a name. In terms of the church visible, just what do we mean by unity? Now there has been much talk about ecumenicity at the grass roots, about getting the discussions out of the theological stratosphere and into the local community. Yet not one of the Disciples appointed to Oberlin gave either of these two sections as his first choice. Why does ecumenism seem less glamorous on our own street than in some other setting? For the same reason that missions seem more dramatic in Wema or Pendra Road or Tokyo than in Kokomo or Mishawaka or Terre Haute? Let's face it: missions or ecumenism or any other work of the gospel can be utterly compelling and unsurpassably dramatic in the old home town if only we will go about it!

Sections 7 and 8 will consider respectively "Authority and Freedom in Church Government" and "The Variations in Denominational Policies."

Here are real issues for Disciples. I am not certain how much we shall feel constrained to say dogmatically on these questions at Oberlin, for at no point, I feel, is our tradition undergoing such radical reconstruction as at that of polity and organization. State after state is revising the structure of cooperation and giving to the common organization an admittedly churchly character or ecclesiastical status. Our faith in extreme congregational autonomy is fast subsiding. Yet we have had so little experience with our new structures that our delegates at Oberlin may feel inclined to listen more than to talk on these subjects. But surely the consideration will be profitable for us.

Pre-Oberlin study committees have been at work on the problems of this division in Nashville, Chicago, New York, Washington, and Toronto. Disciples involved in these studies have been W. B. Blakemore, Hampton Adams, Arthur W. Braden, and James G. Clague.

#### IV

Division III at Oberlin will address itself to *Nature of the Unity We seek In View of Cultural Pressures*. Under the influence of the forces of contemporary history, American churches are adopting certain patterns of unity as well as following certain lines of division which need to be examined in the light of our fundamental Christian standards.

“The Mobility of the Population” and its effect on Christian unity will occupy the attention of Section 9. This section will seek

To appraise the extent of mobility (population, laymen, clergymen).

To discuss how far the Christian duty to strengthen community in social life demands denominational differences be overridden in new areas.

To discuss the strategies by which the churches may develop unity in mission to a rapidly changing society.

Another section will examine “Governmental Policies and Programs” in their influence on the ministry of the churches. Consider the military chaplaincy, for example. It has been observed that a sort of “armed forces religion” is emerging. In other situations where Christian ministry must be rendered by agreement with the government—hospital, prisons, defense areas, on the Voice of America—a peculiar kind of Protestantism appears, stripped of denominational peculiarities. Many chaplains, as well as the persons who have received such a ministry, testify to its helpfulness. Is this least-common-Christian-denominator-in-the-service-of-America type of religion the unity we seek? Or is it a



peril to be avoided? If it is valid, how can it be realized in the civilian community apart from the pressures of government?

One section will occupy itself with "Forces at Work on the College Campus." One of the preparatory documents observes,

There has never been a direct exploration in ecumenical conference of our corporate responsibility for campus life or of the bearing of academic institutions on the unity of the Church. Yet this segment of American culture is highly influential in shaping the dominant patterns of national and Church life.

We may well ask ourselves what portion of the problems faced by young people in colleges and universities has to do with the particular doctrines of their own denominations, and what proportion of them is at a much deeper level. Yet support for student work moves largely—if largely is the right word—through denominational channels. An even more uncomfortable question troubles my conscience. Do Indiana Disciples contribute to our student foundations at I.U. and Purdue out of a deep sense of mission to the students going through the universities or because they feel this is a pretty good way of holding the denominational loyalty of our young people until they get back home again?

Surely one of the most crucial sections will be that of dealing with "Racial and Economic Stratification" and the effect on Christian unity. It will set before itself these objectives:

To examine the degree to which the unity we seek must include the development of more inclusive congregations and denominations.

To assess the perils and perplexities involved in multi-class and multi-race churches.

To understand the conflict between the image of the Church which is held by local congregations and the image which is held by Christian theologians.

To measure the distance between the denominational pronouncements and congregational acceptance.

It is apparent that this whole division on cultural pressures will be dealing with the practical realities of Christian unity rather than with the theoretical abstractions which have so often preoccupied the theologians of Faith and Order. Yet these practical realities must be seen in a theological context. And if we hold that the sectarian walls are crumbling before Christian conviction rather than before social pres-

tures, how will we explain our racial and economic divisions with any given denomination? And why have our most successful congregations—defining successful in no derogatory sense—been for the most part “class” churches?

These issues, of course, cut across every denominational line in America. So far as I can see there is no peculiar Disciple problem in the problems it will be considering. Preparatory study committees have been at work in Boston, Pittsburgh, Durham, St. Louis, and Honolulu. William R. Vivrett, R. Frederick West, Paul Fall, and Donald O. Legg have participated in these groups. Doubtless the work of this division will produce effects which can be felt in our congregations sooner and more obviously than those from the other divisions.

## V

Let us consider the present status of Disciples of Christ with respect to the Faith and Order movement and the quest for Christian unity. We have proclaimed a plea for unity for a century and a half. How well are we prepared to contribute to the discussions of unity, now that the Christian world at large is taking the subject seriously?

Without an undue beating of drums, we may say that the traditional Disciple witness has been a large factor in creating a climate of public opinion favorable to unity. (sic.-Ed.) We raised our voice in the wilderness of sectarianism 150 years ago. Disciples were active in inter-denominational movements at the turn of the century. Peter Ainslie was an ecumenical pioneer. The *Christian Century* speaking out of Disciple tradition, became the ecumenical conscience of American Protestantism. In the early days of the councils of churches, a sizeable proportion of their executive leadership came from our ranks. We have been dutiful members of the National Council and the World Council, sometimes carrying more than our share of the load on certain projects, through the vision of men like George Buckner and Robert Tobias. In many communities our minister has been the gadfly, stinging the churches into a greater degree of cooperation. The image of ourselves which we cherish casts us in the role of leaders in the ecumenical movement, and we tend to assume that our plea holds the answer to the ecumenical problem.

Yet the plain fact is that, with a few exceptions, Disciples have been ineffective and unimpressive in Faith and Order discussions. Fundamentally, these are theological conversations, and for the most part we are unprepared for them by disposition, by formal discipline, or by a mature theological tradition. We have prided ourselves that we are “non-theological,” but one can brag about that only so long in a

theological discussion before the others begin to lose interest. Too often we enjoy taking potshots at those among ourselves who do attempt serious theological reflection. For example, one of our most distinguished professors recently took a gratuitous crack at the Panel of Scholars, of which he himself is a member, as presumably about to write a creed for the Disciples. If a communion persistently makes a sport of cracking eggheads and disparaging theology, it is likely to find itself short on theologians of stature; yet without these much-maligned intellectuals it will scarcely succeed in making much of a contribution in a Faith and Order meeting. Apparently Disciples have not been working overtime in preparation for Oberlin. Of the first 45 preparatory papers by members of local study committees, which were mimeographed and circulated, not one was contributed by a Disciple.

The few Disciples who have made an impression on ecumenical thinking have been men of theological competence—Herbert L. Willett, C. C. Morrison, W. E. Garrison, William Robinson, and (though he has done little writing) S. J. England, who was the most articulate and effective of our delegates at Lund. These men have not all subscribed to the same theology, but they have all been committed Disciples who could speak with clarity and authority.

However, a most exciting development within our brotherhood has begun during the past decade. All about us are appearing signs which give promise of a theological flowering among us.

The study breakfasts at Toronto, sponsored by the World Convention Study Committee, of which Dean Shelton is chairman, attracted crowds of Disciples far beyond the most optimistic predictions. Our folk from all over the world struggled across Toronto by the dawn's early light, reached unsteadily for their coffee, and with open eyes, participated eagerly in discussions on frankly theological questions. The World Convention now has 34 local study committees in 19 countries making preparations for Edinburgh in 1960, and other conventions and institutes are making use of similar study-discussion techniques.

Meanwhile, popular interest in the basic doctrines of the church is flourishing among us if not like a green bay tree, at least like nothing we have known for two generations. Perhaps one reason for this widespread interest is the long silence on dogma which prevailed in many of our churches during a period of wholesome Christian revulsion against a literalism and legalism no longer tenable. Howard Short reports that 30,000 copies of his *Doctrine and Thought of Disciples of Christ* have been sold, most of them for use in church school classes and other study groups. *The Christian Evangelist* recently struck pay dirt with a series

of articles on "What We Believe." The articles were reprinted as a paper-back book, and the supply at the Des Moines convention sold out in the first three days. Now as good Disciples we tend to eye such quasi-systematic material somewhat askance; we are convinced at any rate that it would be more wholesome if we ourselves had written it! Still it is significant that many of our people have become curious about what we *do* believe. Perhaps they are not as adventurous in their inquiry as we should like; in any case, the interest does not seem sectarian in character, and it portends the possibility of a vigorous theological renaissance among us.

One more dramatic example of the new florescence of theology among Disciples of Christ is the appointment of a Panel of Scholars, to re-examine our traditional witness in the light of contemporary knowledge and needs and to survey current trends in our practice in the light of the best theological and biblical scholarship. The most significant aspect of the whole project is not the fifteen men appointed to the panel—we have forty-five others who might just as well have been chosen. It is a fact that the idea of the panel was not conceived by the scholars, but by the agencies. Administrators in the United Christian Missionary Society and the Board of Higher Education said, "The time has come for Disciples to look at themselves theologically." No one contemplates that the Panel of Scholars or anyone else should draw up a confession of faith to be made mandatory upon the brotherhood. It is hoped that in time they will issue some material which will make sense and commend itself to the brethren.

We speak rather flippantly at times of the ecumenical reformation, priding ourselves on finding a great and dramatic name for something we are privileged to live through. But such a term must be taken with utter seriousness. It means that every denomination must itself undergo a radical and painful reformation in the light of the new ecumenical reality. I am not sure how clearly we have discerned the significance of what is taking place. But I believe that Disciples of Christ have begun to be radically transformed by the ecumenical movement, perhaps sooner and more drastically than other denominations.

This, then, is the real Faith and Order issue for Disciples of Christ. In this era of biblical theology and, we dare to pray, of an emerging ecumenical church, will we have scholars and theologians who can witness truly, not only the rest of the Christendom, but also to ourselves 1—1 concerning the unity we seek. And will we have preachers and pastors and teachers who can truly convey to the hearts of men this transforming Gospel, this good news from God?



# Another Goal For Our Ten Year Program Of Advance

*George J. Beazley, Jr., Bartlesville, Oklahoma*

The Christian Church or Disciples of Christ came into existence with a goal, a temperament, and a method. The goal was that of uniting the various denominations into one Christian Church. The temperament was a fierce passion for freedom, born out of its leaders' bitter experience with creeds and presbyteries and fathered by the self-reliance and independence of the American frontier. The method was a realistic study of the Bible, particularly the New Testament, in an effort to return to the basic principles which all churches believed and on which they might unite.

Our Brotherhood has kept its goal, though at times its message of unity has been unity by absorption. It was among the founding bodies of the old Federal Council of Churches and its larger successor, the National Council of Churches. We have given the former organization, among many other leaders, a president, Dr. Edgar DeWitt Jones, and the latter, a general secretary, Rev. Roy G. Ross. We were among the founding bodies of the World Council of Churches and have given that organization many leaders, among them Rev. Robert Tobias. Our movement has produced voices crying out in behalf of Christian unity in tones that every segment of the church has heard and honored. Their names are legion, but in recent decades those of the late Peter Ainslie and at the present Charles Clayton Morrison immediately come to mind.

The Disciples of Christ have maintained their temperament. Often their fierce sense of freedom has jeopardized their cohesion. Sometimes it has slowed their program. Occasionally some leaders have interpreted it as freedom to make everyone else conform to their views, but by and large, our brotherhood has balanced its jealousy for independence with a lively sense of fellowship and cooperation, so that it has been able to maintain its basic congregational government without hamstringing its ability to act as a group.

In the use of its method, Disciples of Christ have not been so able. This movement has, of course, retained its study of the Bible. It still thinks of its seminaries as Bible colleges and fears any movement in theology or education that would take it far from its rootage in the New

Testament. One would expect, however, that such a movement would be famous among the denominations for the Bible scholars which it had produced and that its influence would be felt by excellent books in the fields of biblical study, particularly in the division of the New Testament. This, however, has never been the case.

Its early leaders, like Barton W. Stone and Alexander Campbell, produced some notable books in what today would probably be called New Testament theology or more accurately ecclesiastical systematics, but these books were not very influential beyond the bounds of our own brotherhood. Neither man produced any scholarly commentaries on the Bible or any portion of it. There is a general feeling among our own people that Alexander Campbell was a great Biblical scholar far in advance of his day, but the facts are not quite definite.

Campbell seems to have been quite proficient in the biblical languages, particularly in Greek, but we must not forget that the papyri, which brought a new insight into the vocabulary of the Greek New Testament, were not even discovered in his day and that the basic discipline of textual criticism was so much in its infancy that he seems to have been almost completely unaware of it: It is quite true that in his classes at Bethany, he asked some of the questions which recent biblical critical study has been asking, but Dr. W. E. Garrison says that there is no evidence that the answers he gave were anything other than the traditional answers of his time. Dr. Garrison also points out that, with his devotion to Lockean psychology, his theory of inspiration would almost certainly have been the literalistic one that was common to his period. He was well versed in the scriptures, and his interpretations did break up the orthodox crusts in the minds of many of those persons who heard him. He was progressive, yes, but there seems to be no evidence that he revolutionized the biblical study of the period or that his work ever had any marked effect on the interpretation of the Bible among the denominations with which he and the movement which he led came into contact.

The chapter on literature in Garrison and DeGroot's "*The Disciples of Christ*" shows that we have not produced any really influential books in the field of biblical study since that time. McGarvey's commentary on Acts enjoyed considerable reading in some circles, but even at the time it was written, it was an eddy in a backwater, past which the main stream of biblical study had already rushed.

This failure to contribute influential books and articles in biblical study continues to the present. Undoubtedly the greatest cooperative

commentary being published in America today and one most apt to influence American preaching for the next few decades is the Interpreter's Bible. Our Brotherhood has, however, not contributed to these volumes in quantity which our size and professed concern with the Bible would lead one to expect. The same statement applies to our contribution to the most influential recent version of the Scriptures, the Revised Standard Version.

Below is a table that illustrates these statements. Since we are a movement whose greatest influence is in the United States, only the one hundred and nine representatives of American churches have been used out of the one hundred and forty-five contributors to the Interpreter's Bible. I hasten to say, however, that of the remaining thirty-six from Great Britain and the British Dominions not one is a member of the Disciples of Christ. In compiling the number and percentage of persons furnished by the various denominations to the translating committee of the Revised Standard Version, I have used the same method, eliminating also the one Jewish member of the committee. Of the three members from Great Britain and the British dominions, not one belongs to us. Since comparison of mere numbers would be deceptive, a comparison of percentages has been added. The membership figures for computing these have been drawn from the 1954 *Britannica Book of the Year*.

Denominations	Membership	%	Inter-	%	Revised	%
			preter's Bible		Standard Version	
American Baptist	1,505,653	4.9	9	8.3	3	10.7
Southern Baptist	7,634,493	24.6	3	2.8	3	10.7
Congregational-Christian	1,269,466	4.1	15	13.8	9	32.1
Disciples of Christ	1,815,627	5.9	3	2.8	1	3.6
Evangelical & Reform	751,003	2.4	2	1.8	0	
Evangelical United Brethren	724,055	2.3	1	.9	0	
United Lutherans in America	1,962,256	6.3	5	4.6	1	3.6
Methodist	9,180,428	29.6	22	20.2	5	17.9
Presbyterian U.S.	718,791	2.3	2	1.8	0	
Presbyterian U.S.A.	2,441,933	7.9	21	19.3	1	3.6
United Presbyterian	222,201	.7	2	1.8	0	
Protestant Episcopal	2,482,887	8.0	18	16.2	4	14.3
Reformed Church of America	192,827	.6	3	2.8	0	
Society of Friends	68,612	.2	2	1.8	1	3.6
Universalist	75,982	.2	1	.9	0	
<hr/>			<hr/>			
31,046,214			109		28	

No one is more aware than I that figures such as these do not give a completely accurate picture. The wide variation between the number of writers which the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. has contributed to the Revised Standard Version committee illustrates this, but these figures are certainly accurate enough to be very suggestive and should make us ask if we do not need to arouse ourselves to more intense interest in serious biblical study. Of course we can compare our percentages with those of the Southern Baptists and rejoice that we are at least not at the bottom of the list, but when we look at the remarkable record of the Congregational-Christian Church, we should be led to repentance for our neglect, while even the less remarkable records of the Protestant Episcopal Church and the American Baptists should cause us to pause in reflection.

That these figures are not misleading is proven by a third check which was made on our production of articles and books on biblical subjects. The *Journal of Biblical Literature* is undoubtedly the most influential journal in the United States on serious biblical studies. A check of it for the years 1949 through 1953 confirms the above percentages for our contribution to influential study of the scripture. During this five year period, one hundred and twenty-six articles appeared in this journal. Of these, four were written by Disciples, and three of these four were contributed by one person, Dr. S. Vernon McCasland. These four articles represent 3.2% of the total articles printed in that period, a figure remarkably close to our 2.8% contribution of authors to the Interpreter's Bible and the 3.6% contribution to the translators of the Revised Standard Version.

It may be useful to tell the names of these men that enabled us to reach even these percentages. For the Interpreter's Bible we provided one consulting editor and two contributors. The consulting editor was Sr. Charles Clayton Morrison, for many years editor of the *Christian Century*, and now a contributing editor to that magazine and editor of the *Pulpit*. The two contributors to the Interpreter's Bible were Dr. Vernon S. McCasland and Dr. James Philip Hyatt. Dr. McCasland wrote the article on "The Greco-Roman World." He is professor of religion at the University of Virginia and has just completed a term as president of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis. Dr. Hyatt, who is to write the introduction and exegesis for the book of Jeremiah, is professor of Old Testament at the School of Religion, Vanderbilt University. He was the only Disciple on the translating committee of the Revised Standard Version. The articles in the *Journal of Biblical Litera-*



ture were provided by Dr. McCasland and Dr. Jack Finegan. Dr. Finegan is a professor at the Pacific School of Religion.

I well realize that these four men are not the only Biblical scholars of high stature which our Brotherhood has at present. I owe more than I can ever repay to two, who, so far as I know, have never published a line except in their own seminary quarterly. No doubt, many of those who read this article could make a similar statement. The point I am making is that we are not producing as *many* biblical scholars as our heritage would make one expect we should produce. Because only a few of those that we *do* produce are writing books and articles, we are not making any great impact in biblical study today. Current movements make it evident that such scholarship will be highly determinative in any future movements for unity.

Nor am I selling our great Brotherhood short. I believe we are preserving many valuable insights that will contribute to the life of the church and to its unity, but I also believe that we should be better off within and more influential without if we produced more Biblical scholars. These men, instead of repeating the conclusions of the past, would go to the New Testament with a thorough knowledge of modern Biblical scholarship. Using this tool they would ask again the basic questions about the New Testament church. Then they would write about their findings in scholarly books and articles that would have a wide consumption not only among our people but in the whole church.

Why have we not been producing this type of writing scholar in the quantity we need? Several reasons suggest themselves. First there is the willingness by many in our Brotherhood to accept as final word the conclusions of the past on biblical questions. We have prided ourselves on our freedom, but in this instance we have made little use of it. No people ever protested more eloquently than we have against the solidification of theology into creeds; yet many of our people have set up Campbell's biblical exegesis as though it could not be surpassed. Others have incorporated into unwritten creeds as dogmas the principles that to him, to Scott, and Stone were the fresh discoveries of adventuring spirits. In his viewpoint about many questions, Campbell moved considerably during his lifetime.

The chances are that if he were alive today these Campbellites would find he had moved ahead of them and would have to expel him from their midst as the Baptists had to do in the early nineteenth century.

Closely related to this cause is a second one. It is quite probable that many of our Biblical scholars have not expressed their views in print

because they did not care to become the targets of those who are continually opposed to any movement in thought. If we are to have scholars who are going to discover for us new truths and through their influence allow us to contribute to the stream of biblical discovery in our day, we must preserve for them the freedom to follow truth wherever it may lead. Some of our seminaries are able to grant to their men such freedom, but it is not without significance that most of our writing scholars are in interdenominational positions, where they are not quite so vulnerable to the stings of some of our would-be creed writers.

A third cause for our poverty of writing scholars is the meager salaries which we are paying the men who teach in our seminaries. To write requires enough leisure time both to pursue research and to put one's findings into words. Most of our teachers are so loaded down with academic courses that they do not have such time during the regular teaching year, and if and when they are granted sabbatical years, their salaries have been so low that they must seek additional employment to prevent economic difficulties from developing. Dr. Harlie Smith points out that the salaries of our seminary professors range from \$3,900.00 to \$6,500.00 for nine months of teaching with an average of \$5,000.00. These salaries are not supplemented with parsonages or expense accounts as are the salaries of many of our ministers. In the large interdenominational seminaries, salaries range from a low of \$6,000.00 to a high of \$12,000.00 for an eleven months teaching schedule. If we want to be a people taking our place in the world of biblical scholarship, we shall have to pay for the privilege.

The fourth cause for the dearth of Biblical scholars in the Disciples may lie in the failure of our undergraduate institutions to provide adequate training in the biblical languages.

One can easily understand why the colleges are thus poor in these languages. They have many places to spend each dollar, and they do not care to waste money where there will be no students.

Since 1950 the Disciples of Christ have been in a ten year program of advance. The goals which we have set for ourselves during this period are supremely important. No one would want to divert any energy from a one of them, but I should like to see us add one more to the list, the production from present students of at least three more writing scholars before 1960 and the addition of at least three more for each ten years following. Some may say that you can't produce scholars in such a fashion, but neither can you produce sincere Christians by setting goals in evangelism nor ministers by setting goals in recruitment.

Yet we all believe that the setting of such goals helps us to achieve these purposes.

If we want to produce writing biblical scholars we must do at least three things. First we must rid ourselves of the illusion that we are already proficient in this field. This has been the purpose of the statistics in this article. We are lacking in this field, and the first step toward remedying the condition is to face up realistically to the lack. Here as elsewhere, repentance must come before change.

Secondly, we must give more recognition to the scholars we already have and increase their influence by giving them prominent positions on our convention programs and by encouraging them to research and to the putting of their findings into print. We must encourage them also by seeing that our colleges and seminaries receive sufficient financial support to raise the salaries of the men that are serving us there and to increase these faculties until the burden of teaching is not so heavy as to smother the desire for pioneering into new fields of truth. We shall benefit thereby not only in the additional influence that will come to our Brotherhood, but also by the new vitality that will come to our students by studying under men alive to new frontiers and excited by their discoveries.

Thirdly, those of us who are on the pastoral field should look for young men and women in our membership who have keen minds and a zest for study and encourage them to think of biblical study and teaching as a lifetime work. Then we should begin to direct their reading and their high school courses of study, and, if we are able, to get them started on the biblical languages. Not only would we be making a genuine contribution to the church by supplying a potential scholar, but no doubt our own study and our preaching would grow taller thereby.

One final word. As we who are in the pastorate bemoan our lack of writing scholars and attempt to aid in the production of them, let us not forget that the contributors to the Interpreter's Bible included not only professional biblical scholars but also scholarly preachers who wrote the exposition to the book. We Disciples had only one consulting editor on the list and two scholars who wrote introductory articles and exegesis, but we did not have a single preacher who wrote the exposition section on some biblical book. Let us therefore return to our studies, remembering that administration is not enough, and strive for both scholarly excellence and compelling Christian conviction in our preaching that when some future Interpreter's Bible is compiled we may not be conspicuous by our absence.

# Our Ecumenical Dilemma

W. B. Blakemore, Chicago, Illinois

"I am fully appreciative of the ecumenical contribution that has been made by individual Disciples—men like Ross, Harms, Morrison, Fey, Bishop, and others like them. But as a group, as a brotherhood, we have not exercised ecumenical leadership for a long time."

That statement was made recently by a thoroughly responsible Disciple who holds a position of high leadership amongst us, is deeply loved and respected, and therefore followed. His remark was an honest and true remark, made with some sadness. Disciples for some time have been puzzled by the fact that as a brotherhood we do not exercise much leadership in ecumenical circles. Is not this ecumenical age made precisely for us who belong to the tradition of unity? Why then do we, as a group, seem to have little influence upon the major ecumenical discussions of our time?

## Our Ecumenical Contributions

Our lack of leadership should not be misunderstood as a failure to be ecumenically active nor a lack of appreciation for what we have done on the part of other communions. Not only is the ecumenical leadership of individual Disciples appreciated abroad, we have done many good works in the field of ecumenical service which commend us. Christian bodies everywhere know of our financial support of the publication of *A History of the Ecumenical Movement*. We are widely known for the services rendered in the Balkan area by a noble series of young men—Tobias, Rowe and Gible. Recently Harry B. Partin, a young scholar from Chicago, has been chosen to conduct some special studies for the International Missionary Council and the World Council. These interests constitute commendable good works by Disciples. Even so, it must be said that as a group we have not exercised leadership. This lack has been felt particularly at the times of the great conferences. We have not been articulate in the discussions which are at the heart of these gatherings.

The fact that we Disciples are not exercising leadership does not mean that we have no definite approach to Christian unity. We do have a definite approach, and in terms of that approach we have offered leadership. But the fact is that the direction of leadership which we offer is



being widely rejected. This does not mean that our approach is wrong. It means, in and of itself, only that our Disciple approach and suggestions are not the popular direction in Christian unity at this time.

### What Is Our Approach To Christian Unity?

Despite the frequent assertion that no one can speak for Disciples, we have, as a brotherhood, had a definite approach to Christian Unity. That approach is definable, identifiable, and known by other communions to be the approach for which we stand.

Our Disciple approach to Christian unity has been well known ever since the Faith and Order Conference held in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1927. During that conference, an outstanding Disciple of Christ made a proposition to the conference. The proposition was a highly symbolic one. Its symbolism lay in the fact that it revealed the essential nature of the Disciple approach to unity. That proposition, made by Dr. Peter Ainslie, was that the conference should join together in a common service of communion as an expression of an existing unity. This proposition was symbolic because it made evident to all the other communions the kind of approach to Christian unity and the kind of leadership for which Disciples of Christ stood in 1927—and for which they still stand today. At least, I believe I am right in saying that any Disciple today would vote for such a service as Dr. Ainslie suggested, and any Disciple would still like to feel that it was worth it to place a motion for such a service before a large ecumenical assembly. Dr. Ainslie's motion was important because it announced to Christendom that Disciples propose to lead men to unity by cutting through "red tape," "human speculations" and other historic "impedimenta" to the fundamentals of personal loyalty to Jesus and the simple ritual of the Lord's Supper as the essentials in which we should all be united. To Disciples of Christ, the kind of forthright declaration of unity upon a simple New Testament confession and ordinance seems logical, sound, and truly Christian. It avoids the problems of creeds, which, from our viewpoint, have been historically divisive. The simple approach which we propound seems to avoid human error and complexity. If there is one word which has been associated with "our plea," whether the plea was uttered in its conservative or more liberal form, that word is the word "simple." "The New Testament as the sufficient rule of faith and practice," "personal loyalty to Christ," "profession of faith and obedience as the sole requirement for church membership:" these and similar phrases have commended themselves to us as exemplifying the ease with which we feel unity should be attained.

Yet the amazing thing (amazing to us, that is) that other groups are not responding to our open handed offer to ecumenicity. We have a tendency to feel rebuffed. It seems that we have to keep up the initiative in any unity conversations in which we are engaged. Furthermore, in an ecumenical century we are beginning to get an inferiority complex because we are not involved in any processes of unification which show any lively signs of consummation. We are beginning to feel conscience-stricken because we have preached unity for so long but have little evidence of the practice of our own preaching.

### The Majority Prefer Another Approach

The fact is that there has been a great deal of significant unification taking place during this century. All of it proceeds in a manner almost the opposite of that which we as a brotherhood have proposed.

We have proposed a simple creedless method of unification. Virtually every unification that has taken place in the past century has done so through a complicated process of working out a creedal, confessional or covenantal statement as the basis of unity. In almost every instance it has taken twenty-five to thirty years to work out a satisfactory covenant. But the point is that this is the kind of procedure that has been accepted and is working, whereas our proposal is being passed by.

It is obvious that a creed has been central in such intraconfessional unifications as the 1929 Reunion of the Church of Scotland and the 1939 reunion of The Methodist Church in the United States of America. It is equally true that a creedal statement has been central for such unification as the United Church of Canada, The Church of Christ in China, the Church of South India, or the reunion of Protestants in France. In a conversation with the writer of this article last summer (1956) Bishop Stephen Niell said that he considers the 1938 Reunion of Protestants the most significant of recent times because of the wide varieties of points of view expressed.

In the French reunification there were both liberals and conservatives who had existed as separate bodies since the mid-nineteenth century. Soon after 1900 a desire for reunion was felt. The first World War added urgency to this desire. At a meeting in 1927, an allocation entitled "The Desire of the Young," was presented on behalf of the younger ministry and laymen. The address said in part, "When we think of unity, our idea is of a substantial and real unity which comes from on high, the unity of the Body of Christ. We believe that it is through

unity in faith, and by a common confession of Christian truth, that unity can be obtained."

The common confession of faith which was called for was eventually written, though it was not achieved without considerable theological effort. This union, and others in which a creed played a unitive role, is described in Rouse and Niell, *A History of the Ecumenical Movement*, pp. 463ff.

### Creeds: Are They Divisive or Unitive?

The irony of the Disciple dilemma is that while we keep on asserting, "History proves that creeds have been divisive," the major reunions of our century take place with the help of creeds. This fact cannot be taken as the basis for a blanket generalization that creeds are unitive. During the past year, in a pre-Oberlin study group, we have had many a lively set-to between the right-wing and the left-wing Protestants. Whenever the left-wing has challenged the right-wing confessionalists with the fact that historically creeds have proven divisive, the right wing quite disarmingly admits the point, and yet says that we cannot have unity without the aid of common confessions of faith. The right-wing seems to have outgrown *confessionalism* (at least some of them have) and now say, "It is an over-simplification to believe either that creeds are historically divisive or historically unitive." "Creeds, in and of themselves" they say, "are not the cause of division or union."

Our Disciple point of view was formulated at a time when Christian sects were using creeds to divide themselves off from each other. In a protest on behalf of fellowship, our forefathers adopted an anti-creedal position. Nowadays, in a pagan society like that of modern France or contemporary England, there is a tremendous amount of fellowship and human congeniality. Americans go abroad not only to see the sights, but to participate in the easy-going good nature of a city like Paris. But many a young Frenchman has asked himself the question, "Is this what is meant by fellowship in Christ? How do I distinguish Christian fellowship from the varieties of camaraderie?" His answer is that Christian fellowship is based on a unity in faith, a unity of trust in the same Lord and God. Furthermore, we are able to identify our faith to each other, not by deeds of ordinary humaneness but by what we are willing to confess about God with our mouths. In the midst of a pagan world, characterized by a tremendous amount of congenial good-will, the creed becomes the instrument by which Christians sort themselves out, discover each other and the "fellowship of kindred minds."

We have often said that our plea was, in the beginning, ahead of its time, but that it is being fulfilled in this twentieth century. Certainly, as our founding fathers approached the sects they said, "You are being kept apart by your creeds. Why don't you abandon them." The present day Disciple must face the fact that these same sects are now saying to us, "Look, we are using our creeds as effective instruments of reunification."

### Who Is Right?

Within the contemporary ecumenical movement, leadership is accorded those groups which by history, tradition and past practice have skill in formulating creeds, covenants, and confessions. In the art of formulating such symbolic theological statements, we Disciples have no historic skill or tradition. As long as present tendencies hold, we can expect that our Disciple contribution to the ecumenical movement will be made through individuals and not through our brotherhood proposal regarding unity. None-the-less, it may prove in the long run that our Disciple way of stating the plea for Christian union in terms of simple fundamentals may prove right. The times may come when the limits of creeds and covenants as instruments of unification will appear. Then ecumenical leadership will be called for from us and others like us. However, history is already calling us to a re-examination of one of our cherished traditional planks, namely, our anti-creedalism. We used to be so sure that history teaches the divisiveness of creeds. Yet we live in an age which contradicts that idea and reveals it as an over-simplification. Perhaps we had better become more sophisticated about creeds than our traditional anti-creedalism asked us to be.



# What Good Is The Campbell Institute?

Replies to Editor's Query

Just after the turning day of the new year, I thought—"There ought to be something new under the sun for the *SCROLL* and the Campbell Institute!" What better place, I further surmised, could one find that something new (if anything!) than in the scholarly (sic) minds of the Campbell Institute? Pursuant to this monumental conclusion, I directed a postal card to every member of the Institute. If *you* did not receive one, maybe you have not paid your dues! This U.S. Mail Inquiring Reporter asked everyone the same question: "Will you be good enough to write a paragraph (or two paragraphs if you feel loquacious!) on the following question: 'What are the purposes, the intents, and the future of the Campbell Institute?' What I suppose I am really asking is, What is the basic rationale for the existence of an organization such as the Campbell Institute? I have in mind making a compilation of these answers for a forthcoming issue (s) of *The Scroll*. Whatever you say, I am assuming that I may quote you!"

As you will observe below there are many thoughtful answers to the questions posed. Some replies are longer than others. Some are certainly more to the point than others. Some are downright clever! I am using replies in this issue up to the mark of space limitations. Others will be used in another issue. I sincerely hope that *many* others will be prompted to reply to this very important question.

Am I wrong in making a general conclusion that most of these replies are inferring that at one time in its history the Campbell Institute was vigorous and effective in pushing back the horizons of knowledge and understanding in religion, and that if the Institute can continue (or *recover*) this mission it has a grand future for the causes of religious thought? If it cannot do this service to intelligent religion, then it had better, as the Arabs, fold its tents and silently steal away into oblivion! What think ye?—Editor.

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A means of expression of the thinking and the ideals of the openminded and progressive ministers and scholars of the communion known as Disciples of Christ. A means of fellowship in the common heritage of

those who believe in the progress and adjustment to changing conditions of the Christian cause.

Stephen J. Corey, President Emeritus  
The College of the Bible  
2429-33rd Street  
Santa Monica, California

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I have a feeling that the Campbell Institute could serve even more effectually in the days ahead than it has in the past. It seems to me that it could well place more emphasis on fellowship than it has during the past few years. It should continue to have stimulating discussions of vital Christian issues. If the younger ministers in our churches today can get the type of stimulation and guidance which I received when I first began attending the Institute meetings thirty years ago, it will have a continuing and increasingly vital function to perform.

M. E. Sadler, President  
Texas Christian University  
Fort Worth, Texas

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I take it that the purpose, intent, and future of the Campbell Institute is well stated by Stephen Corey, p. 10 of your most recent issue. (see winter issue, January, 1957).

The purpose of the Institute has been somewhat altered, however, by the enlargement of the fellowship from a small group in Illinois to a nation-wide fellowship. The two meetings of the organization per year are now such that real intellectual exchange by many persons is impossible. The *Scroll* remains as the best medium of exchange.

Many periodicals carry theological issues. How can the *Scroll* make an unique contribution therefore? In partial answer to this question I submit some personal ideas. First of all, it should print articles by men who are not well enough known to use the other periodicals. Secondly, the contributors should feel free to "let their hair down" and be frank and open. Thirdly, the subjects discussed should be vital, controversial, and contemporary in effect. Another idea which might be plausible is to dedicate a single issue to a given topic, announce the topic ahead of time, and solicit and select submitted manuscripts. This might promote creative scholarship and thought.

The implication in your question seemed to be whether or not the Institute had served its time. My answer is that it has unless it makes a unique contribution. Something along the lines above I feel would justify its continuance.

Roy L. Smith, Jr.  
Des Moines, Iowa

This is a layman's idea of why the Campbell Institute will flourish.

Theology, even though inscrutably not an exact science to human beings, is spiritually necessary to anyone who is a hopeless materialist and animalist. In order to keep theology intelligent; in order to refrain from setting up a complete authoritarian system rounded out with fantasy; the spiritual leaders should continue to explore new theses and in doing so should take care not to lose their balance. The Campbell Institute furnishes the opportunity to discuss these theses freely and to test them with the known historical and scientific facts and the accepted doctrines of love and hope. Out of this association should come a continually more solid and satisfying faith to each leader which can be passed on to the listeners and readers at home.

Wendell P. Monroe  
Chicago, Illinois

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I feel that the Campbell Institute can serve a real need among us Disciple ministers by continuing in its original purpose of providing fellowship and discussion. The questions that loom large, and which must somehow be answered if the Institute is to serve a worthwhile purpose, is how to implement that discussion and fellowship.

I feel that geographical distance is the major factor in the path of rendering real service to ourselves as members of the Institute. Therefore, I suggest having state or area meetings perhaps twice a year. Papers could be read and discussed and then submitted to the editorial board of *The Scroll* for publication consideration. Such an arrangement would serve three purposes. *First*, it would provide fellowship among our ministers in the area of serious thinking. *Second*, it would stimulate wider participation and broader representation in the printed organ of the Campbell Institute. I do not want this construed as caving in, but there appears to be a limited number of authors contributing articles to *The Scroll*. Undoubtedly this is largely due to procrastination. Often I have thought of sending a manuscript but simply put it off and then forgot about it. Third, in the give and take of these geographically convenient groups, questions would be brought up which would give birth to solution that would provide maximum benefit among us.

Charles C. Spangler  
Shenandoah Christian Church  
Greenwich, Ohio

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Dear Marshon:

If you remember my peculiar attainments during the seminary years at Chicago, you should have written asking me to draw a picture of

the Campbell Institute rather than write some erudite phrases about it. What I would say would probably be more of a caricature even than what I might draw!

However, since you insist, far be it from me to disappoint your anxious little heart! Behold and believe!

In the tradition of the questing mind of its spiritual founder and namesake, the Campbell Institute has pushed out into the frontiers of the knowledge of God and man and ways of religious experience. Its efforts have sometimes appeared radical and its premises seldom have been conservative. Its questions have often been foreign to the limited mind and the field of its theological concerns have been crossed only by daring feet.

But this is its genius. So long as the intent and purpose of the Institute is to stimulate men to broader understandings and higher inspirations, and so long as its future is the deeper concerns and broader appreciation of the will and word of God in human life, so long will the Institute prosper.

Wayne Selsor  
Central Christian Church  
Galveston, Texas

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The Campbell Institute's principal purpose, it seems to me, is to provide an open forum for intelligent discussion of ideas. No view should be excluded from publication in the *Scroll*, for example, on the basis that it is out of keeping with "accepted" Disciple views. Indeed, intelligent discussion of new ideas and new points of view should be encouraged. And I wonder if this purpose could not be partially fulfilled by inviting more non-Disciples to write articles for the *Scroll*. Articles such as, "A Methodist (or an Episcopalian, a Congregationalist, a Presbyterian, etc.) looks at the Disciples," "written by a Methodist (etc.)," and "Future Prospects for Closer Ties between Disciples and Baptists", written by an American Baptist, would do much to provide really stimulating and creative discussion.

Dwight C. Stewart  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

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The purpose of the Campbell Institute is to keep a growing edge or provide expanding horizons to the brotherhood as a whole. We have a commission to act as Catfish in the hood of a ship filled with Mackerel. It is our job to keep the rest of the brotherhood stirred up, active and alive. Without a group such as ours, the Disciples might become self-satisfied or static and lose their growth factor. Also there is a tendency



toward legalism and solidification and we should have as our goal the propagation of the creative germinal mind.

Our future is as guardians of the attitude and the spirit of free and unfettered research into all fields of religious thought without the restrictions of previous tradition, prejudice, form or practice. May we ever be free minds, adventuring wherever truth and innovation indicate there is progress and emancipation for the mind and spirit of human-kind.

Freedom, innovation, creativity and adventure forever and ever.

Floyd B. McCarthy  
San Diego, California

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The fellowship of the people who meet together at the Campbell Institute is one of its great assets.

Stimulating addresses delivered before a group that is characterized by its freedom of opinion is an asset that our Brotherhood can ill afford to lose. If possible we should do more than in recent years to encourage pioneer thinking and writing. Most of us in the pastorate are too prone to deal with the immediate problems. The Institute can serve as an important agency in broadening the horizon of our consideration of our ministry and the Church.

As to the future of the Campbell Institute it occurs to me that it may well live for a time on fellowship but its ultimate destiny will relate to the creative job which members affiliated with it do in the fields of constructive religious thought.

K. Everett Munson  
First Christian Church  
Maywood, Illinois

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When the Campbell Institute held its first meetings, there was an urgent need for ministers of our fellowship to do creative thinking in restating of the heritage of faith of the Disciples of Christ in the light of the insights of twentieth century scholarship. This scholarship centered around the new perspective on the history and formulation of the Bible. In many ways it was one of the most critical periods of Christian history. It required an entirely new orientation about a source of authority that was considered by the majority as finished and utterly complete.

It seems now that there is a new role for the Campbell Institute, not different in spirit but in kind. The new research of our time has passed from revelations about the Bible to center in three other areas of the Christian life.

First, theological ideas are undergoing reformulation. Theology should always endeavor to describe the faith in terms intellectually honest for

the day. To make the Christian faith intellectually meaningful and interpretative for this age is a challenge to vigorous scholars. Our members of the Campbell Institute can well devote time and thought to this creative endeavor of current theological reformulation.

Secondly, Campbell Institute men should be helping to clarify the mission of the church for this age. The old frame of thought about the missionary program has been found unsuited for the modern world. It would be altogether tragic for our people to withdraw from concern over the part the church will play in shaping the world of tomorrow. How to minister and establish the faith in many nations of our world is a job calling for new research. Moreover the mission of the church on the home front is in need of restudy as the urbanization of our culture speeds onward.

Thirdly, Campbell Institute men should rise to the spirit of research in the field of Christian education. Protestant Christian education has not adopted a major forward step since the creation of the graded curriculum in 1909. The improvements in our methods and our curriculum have been encouraging and effective. Yet adult educational opportunities seem to be limited to sermons and uniform lessons. There is real question as to the ability of Protestantism to rise to the challenges of its competitors if it does not employ more effective methods of equipping adults for the Christian life.

If Campbell Institute men will continue to league together to devote time to creative examination of the faith, then she has my vote of commendation. If she chooses to do otherwise, then I say let her remains rest in peace.

Marvin E. Smith  
Christian Board of Publication  
St. Louis, Missouri

The Campbell Institute is needed quite as much today as in the era in which it was organized. It acquired the reputation of championing liberalism altho its main purpose was to create a fellowship and form for free discussion on the part of all sincere seekers after truth. Today it could help clarify the issues between our cooperative and separatists brethren. The need for cultivating a climate of that among our brethren favorable to the ultimate practice of unity with other Christian bodies should also be a challenge to the Campbell Institute.

Paul Rains  
Family Life Clinic  
St. Louis, Missouri

There is a need of fellowship among the free spirits of the Disciples of Christ so they may continue to stand for a reasonable and practical

religion as contrasted with obscurantism and prejudice. One Elijah thought he was all alone in the world, and he was very weak. It strengthens us all to realize that the numbers of those who defend liberty and progress in religion are considerable.

The free spirits among the Disciples also need constant encouragement in keeping up with the best in modern thought through reading and conference. Professional men may become so lost in the chores of their vocation that they cease to be concerned with the true fundamentals that affect their calling.

Orvis F. Jordan  
Community Church  
Park Ridge, Illinois

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Having been a member of the Campbell Institute for many years, I speak and write in appreciation of it and the stimulation to expanded thinking concerning the various aspects of our Brotherhood life, and Christianity and the world in general. It ought to be continued as a pioneering group of those who like to venture and go a little further than the average in individual and group thinking. It can still help our fellow Disciples' progress in their broadening fellowship and deeper thinking, and I hope it will.

Harry G. Parsons  
Budd Park Christian Church  
Kansas City, Missouri

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The Scriptures teach the doctrine of the Second Mile. But if the second mile is asked, I infer that it is the Christian duty of the orthodox believer to be willing to add a third.

At any rate, lest anyone doubt my orthodoxy, I am providing three paragraphs where you have only asked for two.

The Campbell Institute was first organized over a half century ago by a small group of men with graduate training and liberal ideas. Among them were Herbert L. Willet, Charles Clayton Morrison, Edward Scribner Ames and a number of others who were later to rank among the outstanding religious leaders of America. Few leaders among the Disciples were at that time well trained in the methods and results of modern Biblical scholarship, and those few felt the need of a medium of communication, scholarship and mutual encouragement. The Campbell Institute was organized for this purpose. With the enthusiasm of youth, its founders proposed a grandiose program of research, extending even to archaeological investigations in Palestine!

The latter project came to naught, but the Institute has exercised a profound effect on the history of the Disciples by stimulating interests

in scholarship and research among the young men in our brotherhood. The full extent of this influence is unknown, but among my friends and acquaintances whose years of graduate preparation fell within the second decade of the century, its influence as a source of encouragement and inspiration was incalculable.

The ideals of the founders, which then formed the intellectual frontier of religious advance, have now become commonplaces. But the rationale for the organization remains unchanged. For new times bring new problems, and an open forum for their discussion, and a medium of fellowship and mutual encouragement among their discussants, is still needed. In my day many young men who have since left their mark for good upon our communion would have been lost to the Disciples, if not to the field of religious leadership entirely, had the Campbell Institute not existed as a source of encouragement and hope. And I am confident that in this respect the situation has not changed over half a century and will not change during the foreseeable future.

Howard E. Jensen  
Durham, North Carolina

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As to the purposes and intents I do not know. As to the future I can be as loquacious as anyone.

The future is as bright as it ever was to keep the searchlight upon truth in the Brotherhood. We should never allow our great Fellowship of believers to have faith in anything but the truth, the whole truth about Christ, the Church, and the mind of God in the affairs of men. Falsehood should be ferreted out, hounded down until it ceases to struggle. When our Convention speaks, we should make known the reasons behind resolutions as to whether they are founded and spring from truth or falsehood. We should be guardians of the "truth that sets men free."

Merle E. Fish, Jr.  
First Christian Church  
North Hollywood, California

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Here I am a member of Campbell Institute for less than a year and you are asking me about the rationale for the existence of the organization! But isn't that just the point. Not only can I sharpen my thinking by hearing important controversial subjects aptly discussed, but I can have the rough edges trimmed from my position if I care to express myself. If the future brings a variety of conflicting opinions of all shades intelligently expressed, I am convinced a real need will be met.

James E. E. Morgan  
Cresswell, Oregon



My recent involvements with the Campbell Institute have not been regular and whatever I say, therefore, is not to be construed either as criticism or praise of the current program. My lack of regular attendance is not the result of a lost interest but has been occasioned by other commitments at the time the Institute has met.

I believe the years in which I enjoyed the Institute most were those when the Institute was out on a liberal fringe theologically. It seems to me that it was in a major way responsible for keeping the liberal wing of Disciples of Christ alive and vigorous and resulted finally in establishing us as a more or less liberal religious group.

Having apparently won that battle, the Institute turned to social issues which are important and which are also widely discussed by other groups which are likely to neglect the more intellectual and academic phases of religion. At about this same time the liberals across the land became more or less silent and generally remained so under the onslaught of neo-orthodoxy. All of this is by way of saying that I think it is past time when the liberals should again become vocal to meet the theological issues which confront us and which program, for me, would be of greatest interest and value. For all I know, the Institute may be involved in this currently.

The Institute should provide a forum where ideas can be criticized and sharpened even though generally there may be a likemindedness among the persons who attend.

I have heard it said that the Campbell Institute has served its purpose and ought to go out of business. I do not agree with this in the abstract and would assume that anyone who made such a comment would do so because he felt that currently there was no vitality in the organization. This, of course, I am unable to evaluate because of my lack of current involvement.

The foregoing is probably of no help and I wish I had found it possible to attend more meetings and thereby maybe be more helpful.

Harlie L. Smith

Pres. Board of Higher Education  
Indianapolis, Indiana

# Do Religion And Education Mix?

*W. Marshon DePoister, Orange, California*

The title above is the somewhat euphemistic and crude way of asking about the relationship between education and religion in a democratic society. For three days, March 10-12, 62 conferees—veteran school superintendents at all levels, competent historians, professors of Education, able teachers in other disciplines, experienced bureaucrats, college administrators—wrestled round-the-clock in sessions as they debated one of today's thorniest problems for either religion or education. Among the delegates were 38 protestants, 12 Jews, and 12 Catholics. Although every region and section of the United States were represented, I was the only delegate to represent private liberal arts education, and there were only six educators invited from west of the Mississippi River. Does this indicate a weighting of educational influence toward the eastern third of the United States? An interesting question!

The Committee on Religion and Education of the American Council on Education sponsored the meeting, to assist the Committee to formulate its own policy for public appraisal, and in turn help educational and religious leaders formulate policies and programs at the grass roots.

Stately Arden House, the former mansion of the Harriman family, high in the patroon country of the Hudson River, was the scene of the most stimulating discussion. Arden House was given by the Harriman family (the Governor and his brother) to Columbia University during the presidency of General Eisenhower. It is now used as a vast hotel-resort for just such meetings as this one.

No papers were read. Seven "homework" papers had been in the delegates' hands for several weeks prior to the conference. Preliminaries and build-up information out of the way, it took only minutes before the opening discussions had flushed the main problems to be considered. For three days these problems were attacked from every angle.

The conference centered its energies, first, on the question of religious factors in the teaching of history; second, on the present aptness and clarity of the 1947 and 1953 American Council published reports on religion and public education. F. Ernest Johnson, Chairman of the Committee on Religion and Education, pointed out that the American

Council pioneered in this field of research by convening, in cooperation with the National Conference of Christians and Jews, a conference of educators on religion and public education, which was held in Princeton, New Jersey, in May, 1944. At that time criticism was being aimed at public education because of the scant attention given to religion in its curriculum. On the other hand, many prominent educators were expressing concern lest the growing demand for "more religion in the school" might lead to a breaking down of the "wall" between the church and state. As a result of the Princeton Conference, the Council created the Committee on Religion and Education.

The Committee published its first report, *THE RELATION OF RELIGION TO PUBLIC EDUCATION* in April, 1947. It took a firm position against religious instruction—in the sense of indoctrination—in tax-supported schools, but contended vigorously for including in the public school program, for objective study, religious subject matter wherever it is intrinsically related to a given school discipline and is germane to the subject. This would mean that the study of literature should include our religious classics; the study of history should include the *religious* aspects of the period studies; the social studies program should provide for visitation and observation of religious institutions as well as those related to business, industry, and social welfare; and so on. The American Council on Education has held that religious literacy is an essential goal of a liberal education. In 1953 the Committee on Religion and Education of the American Council published its second volume, *The Function of the Public Schools in Dealing With Religion*. This little volume actually pushed the issues deeper into the grass roots by suggesting there is a great need to *inculcate basic religious values into our educative processes*. This approach to religion has been widely characterized as "study *about* religion." The term has been found useful by many educators, though it is sometimes contended that "study about" is not really education at all, since it does not require or produce that personal *involvement* which is essential to a genuine educative experience.

As they considered the earlier American Council policy statements on religion, the conference generally thought that they were still pertinent to public education. It was generally agreed that religious illiteracy must not be allowed to develop through an attempt by the public schools to assume a "neutralist" position—i.e. that religion should be assumed to be a matter which students could either "take it or leave it" and that it did not make any difference which decision was made. The very difficult "middleground" was approved by the majority, which

meant that while the schools should maintain a climate friendly to religion, there should be no "indoctrination" in the pejorative sense, nor disparagement of *any* viewpoint on religion; neither should the complete secularist be made to feel that his position was out of harmony with any other.

Dr. F. Ernest Johnson, Committee chairman, pointed out the limitations that beset a policy statement intended for the entire nation. "The effort to construct a national procedural norm with respect to the vital and vexing issue we are here confronting," he said, "has been a serious mistake." He indicated how in practice a tradition of strong local control is a powerful determinant in the making of local school policy.

Some discussants, including this one, expressed disappointment that the conference did not take a stronger position on theism. There are here, however, conflicting principles which must be kept in balance. No single principle by itself suffices to solve this delicate problem.

It is my intention to take the core of the summaries of this most recent conference, along with the previous statements of policy of the American Council on Education, to the teachers and administrators of my own community. It is all well and good (and highly provocative!) to discuss these pertinent and disturbing problems at the "upper levels" of administration, but it may be quite another thing when these principles of policy are implemented at the grass roots. Teachers, principals, superintendents, and school board members, who must reckon with irrational arguments of biased parents, may have a great deal of wisdom and insight to offer those of us who wrestle with the problem rather much on an abstract and doctrinaire level. This is a matter which every minister, every educator and every parent should approach with realism and vigor. The outcome may virtually control the destiny of western culture in a future which is not too distant.



# An Appeal

Miss Fannie Carlton, Librarian at Chapman College, Orange, California, is building a collection of Disciplina. This is probably the only sizeable collection of Disciple literature and data west of the Rockies. Miss Carlton would like the help of Disciples who have any Disciple literature which might be useful to such a collection. If you have valuable data which you would like to share with this repository of Disciplina, and with future generations, send your materials directly to Miss Fannie Carlton, Librarian.

Miss Carlton would like also to ask Campbell Institute members for back copies of *The Scroll* and for the following issues:

1951—Winter edition

1952—all issues

1953—all issues

1954—all issues

1955—all issues

1956—all issues

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# THE SCROLL

Journal of the Campbell Institute

## THE WORD OF GOD AND THE LIVING FAITHS OF MEN

Harry B. Partin

## THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST AND THE DISCIPLES

From the Christian Evangelist

## CONSIDER YOUR CALL

Carroll Cotten

## THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST AND BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP

Clyde Curry Smith

## WHAT GOOD IS THE CAMPBELL INSTITUTE

More Replies to Editor's Query

## THE EDITOR'S PAGE

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## Renascent Religions and the Gospel

by HARRY PARTIN

IN 1946 Dr. Merle Davis, Director of Research of the International Missionary Council, wrote: "While the non-Roman Catholic churches of the world are evangelizing between *one and two million* non-Christians a year, in each twelve months a net *twenty to twenty-five millions* are added to the non-Christian population of the world." (International Review of Missions, April, 1946). He did not attempt to say what proportion gave some allegiance, nominal or real, to the non-Christian religions. Undoubtedly, it would be an overwhelming majority.

### *The Expansion and Resurgence of the Non-Christian Religions*

The growth of the non-Christian religions is not due solely to population growth, but also to the missionary efforts of adherents of the major non-Christian religions (Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam). J. Spencer Trimingham in *The Christian Church and Islam in West Africa* (I. M. C. Research Series, No. 3) writes of the extent and effectiveness of Muslim expansion into the interior of Africa: "... Islam is no longer limited to the desert and northern steppe but has penetrated even into the forest region." Dr. Max Warren writes of Buddhist missionary activity: "A million

rupee fund is being raised by the Buddhists in Ceylon to send a mission to Germany. Centres of Buddhist studies are becoming a feature in many Western countries, in Europe and America." (C. M. S. News-Letter, June, 1956). Muslim mosques are now found in Chicago, New York, and several other large cities of the United States. A national magazine recently published a two-page color picture of the new mosque in Washington. Hindu *Vedanta* has its missionaries in the West and finds many admirers, if few adherents, among the *intelligentia* of the West.

The resurgence of the non-Christian religions exhibits itself also in the theological sphere. For example, not only are there Muslim missionaries, but there is increasingly an Islamic theology of missions. These religions are no longer on the defensive, but are caught up in the whole Asian and African reaction against the West. Not only is the uniqueness and superiority of the Christian religion denied, but Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims claim uniqueness and superiority for their own religions.

It is not simply that the religions are expanding geographically, numerically, and theologically. At the base of the expansion there is a resurgence of the religions in their traditional strongholds. Expectations of an earlier generation of Christian missionaries were that under the impact of Christianization and Westernization the non-Christian religions would grow weaker and weaker. This has not happened. In many countries the religions have greater vitality than when Christian missions began their work. To say that this is due to "the failure of Christian missions" is far too simple an answer and discounts the steady accomplishments of missions (including their role in stimulating developments *within* the religions). An understanding of the nature and sources of the religious resurgence is imperative for the church today. It involves seeing the religious developments in their intimate inter-relationships with the whole social, political, and economic context. Response and reaction to Western technology with its accompanying philosophy of materialism (certainly as seen from the Asian point of view), the assertion of the values of the traditional religion and culture, the attempt at a cultural re-integration, the growth of national self-consciousness and striving for independence, the attempts to cope with the modern world—all these are powerful factors in the resurgence and have yet to be understood in their full implications.

### *The Meeting of the Religions*

The resurgence of the religions means that a new "religious encounter" is beginning to take place. At innumerable points and in a variety of forms the religions are meeting in a new way. As stated above, most of the Asian and African countries are attempting a cultural re-



integration. The religions are meeting as they relate themselves to this task. The Asian and African churches stand today as churches in the midst of all the problems and tensions such a mammoth task involves. The temptation of the churches is to avoid the additional tension that is created in being a witnessing church. It may accept a ghetto existence in the presence of the religious majorities hoping thereby to receive certain rights and to be let alone, or it may participate in the cultural reintegration by an uncritical identification with national aims and programs. To remain the church is to pay the price of the tensions of encounter.

The churches in Asia and Africa are called to fight the spiritual battles inherent in their own situations. It may be that in this age of ecumenical contact and of theological and cultural exchange, churches and theologians, scholars and missionaries (who have adequate knowledge and experience of the non-Christian cultures and religions) will lend their aid. But it will always remain aid, not the real battle, for two reasons: first, because it is the churches' peculiar, God-given task, which no one can take from them, or take over for them; second, because the non-Christian environment can only take seriously the Christian witness of churches which are a part of the same life-texture and of the same historical situation and destiny.

### *Christian Views of the Relationship between Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions*

During the early decades of the present century Christians gave considerable thought to the relationship between Christianity and the other religions. While they could be extremely critical of the crudities of popular Hinduism, for example, they could write appreciatively Bhakti Hinduism ("loving devotion"). The tendency among missionaries as well as among historians of religion was to see elements in the major religions which seemed to be evidences of God's activity there. The Rev. J. N. Farquhar's book, *The Crown of Hinduism* (1913), crystallized missionary opinion on the relationship between Christianity and the religions. Farquhar held that in Hinduism there are longings and glimpses of truth which find their "fulfillment" in Christianity. The Christian missionary should seek to discover the elements of truth in Hinduism and to show how these find clear and complete expression in Christianity. Farquhar wrote: "Christ provides the fulfillment of the highest aspirations of Hinduism . . . He is the Crown of the Faith of India." The missionary has a "point of contact" with the Hindu at the same time that he is maintaining the superiority and finality of the Christian religion.

In 1932 *Re-thinking Missions: A Laymen's Inquiry after One Hundred Years* was published. Its conception of the relationship among the religions was plainly that of the chairman of the Laymen's Commission, William Ernest Hocking. It rejected the doctrines of "fulfillment" and urged instead a doctrine of "reconception." By "reconception" was meant that each religion should think through its own meaning anew, not alone, but in contact and conversation with the other religions. In the end, it was believed, Christianity would become the world faith but it would be a deepened and broadened Christianity, more aware of its own distinctive nature and contributions and at the same time enriched by the religious insights of non-Christian religious men. The task of Christian missionaries, it was held, is not to evangelize directly, but to share religious experiences with men of other religions in order that the depths of those experiences might be sounded and profounder religious insights revealed. The report aroused considerable discussion and debate, but it did not greatly affect the outlook of the churches and missionary societies. "Fulfillment" still held the field generally.

In 1938 Professor Hendrik Kraemer, a Dutch missionary in Indonesia and later Professor of the History of Religions in the University of Leiden, wrote *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, a keen and forceful indictment of both "fulfillment" and "reconception." The book was written in preparation for the meeting of the International Missionary Council in Tambaram, Madras, in 1938 and set off the famous "Tambaram Debate." Professor Kraemer held that Jesus Christ is not the fulfillment of the religions, but is rather the "crisis" of all religions. The Gospel is set against all religion. According to Kraemer, man makes his religion. That is, "religion" is a product of man's mind and spirit as he tries to give order and meaning to his experience. The Gospel, in contrast to religion, is God's revelation of his nature and will. All religions, including Christianity, stand under the judgment of the Gospel. They are to be transformed, not fulfilled, by it. Nor is "reconception" a proper course for the Christian missionary. To try to "reconceive" Christianity is simply to compound man's sin in trying to "find out" the God who has already revealed himself fully and finally in Jesus Christ, the Word become flesh. Christian faith is not a quest but a response. The task of the missionary is that of faithful witness to a Gospel which judges his religion as severely as that of his hearer. In his latest book (*Religion and the Christian Faith*, 1956) Professor Kraemer says the missionary must have "radical humility and downright intrepidity": humility with regard to himself and intrepidity with regard to his message.

Most of the discussion of the relationship of Christianity and the non-Christian religions since Tambaram has centered around Professor

Kraemer's book and the issues it raises. In general, it may be said that the European theologians and missionary specialists in the religions have sided with Professor Kraemer in his main theses. The writings of his fellow-country man, J. H. Bavinck, reveal significant dissatisfactions and elsewhere divergencies are to be noted. The British, American, and some "Younger Churches" scholars and theologians who have concerned themselves with these questions have commonly tried to find a middle way in the debates. On the one hand, they have wanted to take full account of the uniqueness of the Gospel and the religion to which it has given rise. On the other hand, they have generally held that God has revealed something of his nature and will in the non-Christian religions and that the response to that "general revelation" (as it was commonly called) has not been totally false.

The paper contributed to the Tambaram debate by an American participant, Dr. Walter Marshall Horton, was significantly entitled "Between Hocking and Kraemer." He wrote of being in "a state in which my Hocking-self, though chastened and corrected, has neither been put to flight by nor absorbed within my Kraemer-self, but survives and flourishes, sometimes quite at peace with my Kraemer-self, sometimes carrying on a lively campaign against the theological errors that appear to be implicit in Kraemerism." (*The Authority of the Faith*, Madras series, Vol. 1). The chief question Horton put to Professor Kraemer was this:

How then is it possible to draw so sharp a distinction as Kraemer draws between the prophetic religion of biblical revelation and all other religions, as though the former alone represented God's word to man, and the latter were simply man's vain and presumptuous attempt to scale the heavens? If presumption and self-aggrandizement appear in Christianity, do not humility, awe, self-abasement in the presence of the Holy One appear in non-Christian religions, and are they not signs of a genuine though incomplete self-revelation of the divine Word, operative from old in every land?

The most effective "challenger" of Kraemer's theses today appears to be Dr. Kenneth Cragg of the Hartford Seminary Foundation whose recent book, *The Call of the Minaret*, deals with Muslim-Christian relationships in a fresh and convincing way.

Today it is the non-Christian religions which are raising the question of their relationship to Christianity. As Dr. Cragg has put it in regard to Islam: "Islam is cross-examining Christianity." Confident, thoughtful adherents of the religions are forcing a reexamination of the relationship and they will not accept easy answers. Indeed, they intend to provide the answers (one has only to think of Radhakrishnan in India).



A Consultation on "Christianity and Non-Christian Religions" was held at Davos, Switzerland, in 1955 under the auspices of the Departments of Evangelism and Missionary Studies of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council. Its stated purpose was to resume the Tambaram debate. However, it was soon apparent that while the issues of Tambaram were very much alive, the situation was so vastly different that a resumption of the debate as such was unwise and even impossible. Clearly, the time was right for a thoroughgoing study of Christianity and non-Christian religions *in the new context*.

The same concern was finding expression along another line. The Willingen (Germany) Conference of the International Missionary Council in 1952 recommended the setting up of regional centers for the study of the non-Christian religions. Such centers have been established in the Near East, India, Ceylon, and Hong Kong while others are contemplated (for example, in West Pakistan and Burma). It was clear that any ecumenical study in Christianity and the non-Christian religions would work in closest co-operation with these centers and that they would be the focal point for actual research.

The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches approved in 1956 the undertaking of a study project, "The Word of God and the Living Faiths of Men," jointly by the Department of Evangelism and the Department of Missionary Studies. The study was described as being a study of:

- ... the nature of the living faiths of men and the elements in them of appeal and power;
- ... the nature of the Word of God which is addressed to men who live by these faiths;
- ... the nature of the relation between the Christian message and these faiths;
- ... the ways in which the church may be enabled to communicate this word to those who live by these faiths.

The task of formulating the study in greater detail and of fashioning a working plan is the responsibility of a committee of fifteen historians of religion, missionary scholars, theologians, and biblical scholars drawn from East and West. Three participants in the Tambaram debate (Professors Kraemer and Horton and Dr. David Moses of India) are included. This group will carry on the central theological study and discussion, always in close connection with the "on the spot" studies of the centers. It is hoped to convene the group annually.



Additionally, there is the need to discover the studies and discussions that are already going on, here and there, by individuals and groups, and wherever possible to relate them to the study project. There is also the need to stimulate studies and discussions as widely as possible among individuals, churches, universities, and theological schools.

Disciples of Christ through their Council on Christian Unity were asked by the World Council of Churches to participate in the study project by providing a man to help direct the study and to engage in the study itself. The Council on Christian Unity agreed and the writer was given the assignment. He accepted it with the conviction, well-expressed by Professor Kraemer last year, that "the Christian Church is heading towards a real and spiritual encounter with the great non-Christian religions. Not only because the so-called younger churches, the fruits of the work of modern missions, live in the midst of them, but also because the fast growing interdependence of the whole world forces the existence and vitality of these religions upon us, and makes them a challenge to the Church to manifest in new terms its spiritual and intellectual integrity and value." (*Religion and the Christian Faith*, p. 20)

Harry B. Partin  
Edinburgh House  
London

## The United Church of Christ and Disciples

*from The Christian - Evangelist*

(The material printed below under this title appeared originally in *The Christian-Evangelist* for July 29, 1957. The original article, "The United Church of Christ is Born", was written by Gaines M. Cook, Executive Secretary of the International Convention of Disciples of Christ. In the early parts of the article Mr. Cook has described briefly the historical antecedents of the effected merger of the Congregational-Christian churches and the Evangelical and Reformed churches. It required seventeen years of painstaking and tedious study to effect the union. Then Mr. Cook quickly told of the effecting union organization in Cleveland, Ohio June 25, 1957. He described the people who were present and he listed the Disciples of Christ who were "officially" present. Then follow Mr. Cook's comments as they are cited below.

For at least five years I have hoped that some able Disciple would write some direct and frank words about the relationship between the Dis-

ciples of Christ and this proposed union of the Congregationals and Evangelicals. None has been written. It might be unfortunate if the Editor of the SCROLL were compelled to write these words himself, for what he would write would not have a kindly slant toward his own religious denomination! Mr. Cook begins a summary by saying, "We expressed our hope that the conversations would be initiated at such time as the United Church of Christ feels that they have sufficiently consolidated their organizational procedures. In fact, it would be premature to enter into any conversations until our brethren are ready to talk with us." This is precisely the nexus of our own timidity. We give evidence of failing to believe in our own stated convictions! For a century and a quarter, "the time has been premature!" Will the accomplished days *ever* arrive? Some of us are beginning to doubt if the Disciples of Christ ever have had or ever will have a genuine interest in effecting a union with *any* other Christian organization! We are religious cowards who are afraid to look squarely in the face the implications of religious union with *anyone*! How long, O Lord, how long!—Ed.)

The Disciple delegation agreed that our presence was quite significant in that we were privileged to witness the actual consummation of a dream which has been in the hearts of Disciples of Christ for 150 years, although our hearts were saddened that we were still onlookers and not active participants.

Throughout the sessions of the Uniting Synod reference was made again and again to the fact that this union should not be construed to be purely organizational in nature. If this were the case the way is open for pride in the achievement of the participants. There was a strong emphasis that this union could only be valid as a response to the moving of the Holy Spirit and there was fervent and earnest prayer that the development of the merger would take place only under complete submission to the will of God as He leads in the days ahead.

The Disciples delegates stood in the reception line for two hours and fifteen minutes, exchanging greetings with the delegates of the newly organized United Church of Christ. Many words of appreciation for our presence came from our friends, and encouraging expressions of hope that we might one day be part of the United Church came from almost everyone who exchanged greetings with us.

Participants in the United Synod recognized that it may take several years to develop a constitution and to arrange particular aspects of the union to make the new United Church one body. But there were no fears expressed regarding any possible obstacles and the Church goes forward confident that it will become far greater in its spiritual power

and service than the mere adding together of the total membership of two religious bodies.

Questions were frequently asked of the Disciples of Christ delegation regarding our conversations which have already been endorsed by the International Convention and accepted by the Uniting Synod, looking to the participation of our brotherhood in the United Church.

We expressed our hope that the conversations would be initiated at such time as the United Church of Christ feels that they have sufficiently consolidated their organizational procedures. In fact, it would be premature to enter into any conversations until our brethren are ready to talk with us.

The Council on Christian Unity, to whom responsibility for informal negotiations has been intrusted, will judiciously consider the timing of such conversations.

Carefully worded statements were made public at Cleveland indicating that the United Church of Christ considers itself a "uniting church" and earnestly desires to keep the door open not only to Disciples of Christ, but to any other religious bodies. We understand that the intention is to keep the SITUATION fluid and adaptable in order that freedom may be exercised under the guidance of the Holy Spirit whereby the movement now begun may be far more inclusive.

## Consider Your Call

*Carroll Cotten, Riverside, California*

"Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?" Saul of Tarsus heard this commanding sentence from the midst of a blinding light on the road to Damascus. Through this highly mystical experience, Saul transformed his whole life and became the apostle to the gentiles. We say this was Paul's call.

To the young ministerial prospect the question of the call invariably comes. When asked by a well meaning elderly lady what my call was, I was at a loss for words; I did not know what a call was or of what it consisted. What is meant by this term "the call"?

I am sure the elderly lady who spoke to me believed the call consisted of "God speaking to me directly and telling me to prepare myself for the ministry." If this were an absolute requisite for the ministry, I could not enter and I dare say, few candidates that I know could. I

would certainly not consider this type of experience exclusively the call. F. E. Davison offers another possibility in his book, "I Would Do It Again". He writes, "It is now forty years since I began to hear the call to the Christian ministry. That call came through no blinding light on a Damascus Road. Clouds without number floated over the farm where I lived and worked, yet no cloud parted, and no voice spoke, telling me that I should enter the ministry. Some people may have had such ecstatic calls, but for me the call of God was much more prosaic and much more gradually recognized.

My call to the Christian ministry came through my father, who was an elder in the home church (but if he ever dreamt of my being a preacher he kept the dream to himself). It came through a Christian mother, who was always at her post of duty in the church. It came through a Methodist neighbor lady, who believed in me and prayed for me. It came through a group of young people, who elected me president of their organization. It came through a minister, who asked me one day to assist him in the pulpit. It came through a village church that invited me one summer to preach for two Sundays and, six months later called me from the schoolroom where I was teaching to my first pastorate. My call to the ministry came through God's revelation of the world's need for Christ's gospel."

The call then is the result of an individual who becomes aware of his abilities and is searching for the vocation in which he can best use them for the good of others. The call is simply made up of the importance of the considered vocation and talents and abilities the individual possesses. It is interesting to note that the terms vocation and call derive from the same root. To many the term call is almost synonymous with vocation and rightly so, I think.

There is a common misconception that the call belongs exclusively to the ministry. To follow this line of thinking is to set up a false distinction between the sacred and the secular. Every useful work is ordained of God. The farmer who raises food has a divine commission. Surely the healing ministry of the physician is not divorced from the purposes of God. This whole concept of the call being limited to the ministry and being greatly different from the call of duty anywhere, stems from the idea that the minister is different from anyone else, that he is a member of a peculiar species of the homo sapiens. The minister has no special superhuman strength. I often wonder, however, if we as laymen do not project our comic book knowledge of Superman and Captain Marvel on to the minister.

There is no good reason why the minister should be anymore a Man



of God than you or I. Each one of us has the opportunity to grow spiritually, to reach and tap the power of God. This is one of the central points of the reformation and the protestant faith.

I suppose I must admit the minister is generally a little different from the rest of us, but not basically. He has developed his sense of stewardship and mission while ours is still under-nourished. I agree with Spade Cooley in saying, "shame, shame on us."

The question is not, is there a call for us. There will always be important work to do and abilities to offer, the hard task is the receiving of the call.

Money is the root of all evil, it has been said, but I do not believe it is true. It is much deeper and harder to reach. The problem is my dear ego. This lack of ability to forget ourselves will get in the way everytime.

The Nation's number one health problem is mental illness. One out of every four is in need of psychiatric assistance. The reason the unstable person is beside himself is that he can think of no one besides himself. Every truly successful man lives and works for something higher than himself. The Key to answering the call is self-forgetfulness. This is the first step in attuning ourselves with the will of God. As in all worthwhile things it requires work to discover and follow God's will. It requires a great amount of searching of one's self and even more commitment to follow what one has found.

In golf the follow through is always what perfects and controls the play. And so it is in life. We must make a well planned and well executed follow through stroke or all is wasted. We just can not seem to find the answer to our call while watching the TV set from 6-11 every night. Nor can we students find our answer by staying up so late every night that we find ourselves mentally and physically asleep during the following day in class. (This type of situation very seldom occurs because the student *does homework* for such lengthy hours!) We are given the freedom of choice and along with this freedom comes the terrific responsibility to choose wisely and justly and to remain steadfast in our decisions.

I sometimes have the feeling that women do not consider rearing a family a calling in life. The calling of motherhood, the vocation of forming and molding young lives, is perhaps the highest calling there is. The family is the backbone of the American Nation, and I fear it is shaking at its foundations these days. The responsibility to answer the call of motherhood has never been as great.

As a member of the Cardinal Quartet at Chapman, I have the opportunity of witnessing many women's social groups, existing solely for social purposes, and I do not believe I know anything under the sun more useless than a middle aged women's social club. Ladies of this age span appear to feel useless, with their families reared and off somewhere else. This condition is a tragedy in our society, it does not have to exist, a tragedy because all the potential growth and good works possible remain latent and inactive, not used. There can be a real contribution made here if they will only search for the way.

But perhaps even more sad is the condition of the student who is concerned only with getting out of this "hole of a college" and making a big stinking stack of legal tender. Our sense of direction toward lasting values is often pathetically lacking.

The call of duty and opportunity is there for everyone of us. I ask that you along with me might consider your call. There is a real contribution everyone of us can make if we will only forget ourselves, search for God's will, and follow what opportunities we find. Let that youthful spirit of missions and adventure get a hold of you. It's there, it may have been in hibernation for quite awhile, but it is there. Consider what Barton Hunter says and then let us apply it to ourselves:

"Listen you! You with the broad grin and the freckled face. You with the steam of youth pounding in your veins. What are you going to do with your life?"

What are we doing with our lives?

## Disciples of Christ and Biblical Scholarship

*Clyde Curry Smith, Chicago, Illinois*

As one engaged in the task of becoming adequately prepared as a Biblical student at the graduate level, the penetrating article by Mr. George Beazley in the Spring, 1957 issue of *The Scroll* struck home with force. And it has prompted me to add a few additional observations from within the process of Biblical study.

Not only is it true that the Disciples have over the past ten years had few writing-scholars in the academic discipline of Bible, but it is also the case that few in that same period have completed or even begun doctoral work in this field. At the University of Chicago, where adequate resources for modern Biblical study are available and where the

Disciples in terms of the Disciples Divinity House have facilities for taking advantage of these resources, the statistics indicate the same dearth of interest or pursuit of interest as those statistics presented by Mr. Beazley. In the past ten years only one Disciple has received a Ph. D. in any phase of Biblical study, and only three others are in some stage along the way. A fourth, whose degree work remains incomplete, has moved over to the teaching of systematic theology.

Now it is not my concern to further explore the meaning of such statistics, nor pile up additional ones which would present the current situation in those several centers of learning which have the facilities to prepare men as concerned scholars of the Bible. Rather I should like to consider what it means and requires to study Bible in this time.

Bible study in the mid-twentieth century demands a scope of inquiry scarcely matched by any other academic discipline. For the Bible is at once a book of history and a book of faith. As a book of history its study involves the use of all the tools of modern social and linguistic sciences, and in the case of certain techniques, such as dating manuscripts by the radio-carbon process, its study moves out even into the area of the physical sciences. The study of the historical background of the Biblical world, the study of the origin and development of social customs and institutions, the study of archeologically discovered artifacts, including written documents, the study of languages and literatures cognate with the Bible—all of these, and many others, contribute one part of the study of the Bible. But the Bible is also a book of and for faith. To a certain extent the above-mentioned areas also contribute to this phase. But beyond them one must also delve into the history of Jewish and Christian life and thought which made and makes use of the Bible. Yet even here the task is not complete, for there remains the constructive theological task of relating this heritage to the needs of individuals and institutions in these times in which we live.

Beyond this scope of inquiry there is the demand placed upon the individual student to arrive at a level of depth in terms of which he is immediately related to the study which is set before him, and out of which he may produce a significant contribution to learning which takes cognizance of the breadth of his field and yet which represents a constructive effort on his part.

This then in brief is the first consideration of what is meant and required of one engaged in the study of the Bible on an academic level. But another consideration is involved—namely, the preparation and personality of one who would become a Biblical scholar.

The distinction just made seems also to me to point up the major

obstacle which limits the number of those entering this field of inquiry. For while the scope of the field is large, and the depth demanding, these alone would not constitute the obstacle; for any other field equally challenging could be described in a similar vein. The obstacle comes then in terms of preparation and personality.

By preparation is understood that educational and religious background which enables an individual to meet the specific challenges of Bible study. The most difficult hurdle confronting one is in the area of language. To minimally work in this field no less than five languages besides English are needed, and more would be preferred. I think it becomes obvious when one looks at the general tenor of American education that the challenge which this presents is not met. It is a rare student who is willing to undergo the discipline involved in acquiring languages in such abundance. Especially is this true once he has reached the age of graduate study. And besides it is a rare institution which offers such resources. The present trend in ministerial education itself is away from language study, and for valid reasons, but this does not lessen the problem. But without preparation in languages there can be no Biblical scholarship.

Disciples of Christ educationally have since the days of Alexander Campbell insisted that the Bible is as much a part of "liberal" Education as the Classics but it can not be said that Disciples of Christ institutions of higher education have been long on the presentation of the Biblical or the classical languages.

The other factor which presents itself in terms of preparation is the religious background. It would seem that when the Bible is taught in colleges, the study remains too nearly at the level of the Sunday School. That is to say, Biblical study on the average college campus is not given the academic stature of any other collegiate discipline. On the other hand, the exact opposite is also frequently the case: Bible study is purely critical with no attempt made to bring the student's religious spirit along with his mind. Needless to say, in either case, the student is not inspired to consider Biblical study as a possible academic alternative. On top of these factors which might be considered the result of poor teaching method, there is also the possibility of the administrative stigma placed upon "required" courses in religion. Without a sense of academic freedom, without a sense of the academic respectability of the subject matter, and without a sense of the religious maturity of the student with regard to the Bible, there also can be no Biblical scholarship.

The Bible has been the foundation of Disciple thought, but that



foundation has scarcely been the subject of the kind of concerned, yet critical, presentation which would make it vital in our age.

Finally, we need to say something about the kind of personality needed in such an enterprise. Obviously, in our discussion of preparation something concerning personality has also been said. But this needs to be expanded. To be a Biblical scholar one must be committed to the God to whom the Bible points. Without this commitment the whole of one's labor will be sterile. But commitment is not simply piety, nor is it in any sense simply devotion to "the Book". Rather commitment involves the integrity of heart and mind, of sensitive awareness and acute criticism. Commitment also involves patience—the willingness to take the long years needed for such preparation without stopping short or being satisfied too soon. And in this modern world such patience comes only in the midst of extreme pressures—the concern for family, for the security of home and occupation, for the freedom of inquiry and research. None of us can be scholars apart from this world. But commitment is the willingness to take this risk—to love by faith. And without a personality so committed, there will be no Biblical scholarship.

This it seems to me is what is meant by Biblical study in this time, and what is required of one who undertakes such study. The Disciples of Christ have a great heritage with respect to the Bible, but that heritage alone will not call forth Biblical scholars as we are well aware with but a casual glance at our history. In the late analysis, to be a Biblical scholar one must be called by God, for Biblical scholarship is a special ministry requiring specially prepared men. The mediation of such a call however is left to us, and might well be a goal for the next decade. But to have scholars in the next decade the Disciples can not wait that long. It is the young men now entering college who must encounter the Bible at its depths and be challenged to respond to such an encounter. But one only wonders if the Disciples are really able at this time to present the Bible in such a manner.

Clyde Curry Smith

# What Good Is The Campbell Institute?

## *More Replies to Editor's Query*

The basic rationale for the Campbell Institute is to keep alive the intellectual, natural, human, this-World, scientific, historic, no-hocus-pocus reasonable God in the present world in every life view of religion. This is the lovely essence of liberalism and I am all for it.

Fred Helfer  
Baltimore, Maryland

The Scriptures teach the doctrine of the Second Mile. But if the second mile is asked, I infer that it is the Christian duty of the orthodox believer to be willing to add a third.

At any rate, lest anyone doubt my orthodoxy, I am providing three paragraphs where you have only asked for two.

The Campbell Institute was first organized over a half century ago by a small group of men with graduate training and liberal ideas. Among them were Herbert L. Willett, Charles Clayton Morrison, Edward Scribner Ames and a number of others who were later to rank among the outstanding religious leaders of America. Few leaders among the Disciples were at that time well trained in the methods and results of modern Biblical scholarship, and those few felt the need of a medium of communication, scholarship and mutual encouragement. The Campbell Institute was organized for this purpose. With the enthusiasm of youth, its founders proposed a grandiose program of research, extending even to archaeological investigations in Palestine!

The latter project came to naught, but the Institute has exercised a profound effect on the history of the Disciples by stimulating interests in scholarship and research among the young men of our brotherhood. The full extent of this influence is unknown, but among my friends and acquaintances, whose years of graduate preparation fell within the second decade of the century, its influence as a source of encouragement and inspiration was incalculable.

The ideals of the founders, which then formed the intellectual frontier of religious advance, have now become commonplace. But the rationale for the organization remains unchanged. For new times bring new problems, and an open forum for their discussion, and a medium of fellowship and mutual encouragement among their discussants, is still needed. In my day many young men who have since left their mark for good

upon our communion would have been lost to the Disciples, if not to the field of religious leadership entirely, had the Campbell Institute not existed as a source of encouragement and hope. And I am confident that in this respect the situation has not changed over half a century, and will not change during the foreseeable future.

Howard E. Jensen  
Duke University  
Durham, North Carolina

1) What is the basic rationale for an organization such as the Campbell Institute? *Purposes:* Most of its members have joined the Institute because they were (a) liberals in a conservative area, (b) Chicago alumni, (c) liked the looks of the programs, (d) were interested in a fellowship with some like-minded people. This is not to say that all of the members are "Chicago Liberals".

I could begin by saying what I think The Institute should *not* be, or ways in which it should not act:

- It should not act as an alumni association of the Disciples Divinity House. This is another one:
- it should not compete with the International Convention by having on its program for discussions there any items which duplicate the sort of thing that is done by the convention. I would like to say that it should not do anything at the Convention which ought to be done by the Convention! But so many things ought to be done at the Convention, and aren't, that this provides a rationale for some of the "mid-night" meetings of the Institute.
- it should not be a rally for theological liberals, although I trust that it would continue to be a channel for communication among persons with a *liberal spirit* and concerns. True liberalism (as an open-ness to new ideas and a liberal spirit!) does not characterize many so-called liberals in theology who are too dogmatic in their beliefs to have decent fellowship with those with whom they differ.

The Institute should:

- continue to press for a more adequately trained ministry. Now that the battle for the B.D. is won, it might well turn its attention to other reasons why the minister finds himself so poorly prepared to deal with his world, his people and the demands of his church. What might be done about the *dilemma of the educated pastor* who finds himself still inadequate?

—Keep alive, as much as possible, its most stimulating role as the “open forum”, where at un-official sessions, one may discuss the issues that are “too hot” for public discussion in the conventions and official agencies of the brotherhood. In some cases this might well be done with anonymous papers. What issues? There are many: (1) The delegate convention and our growing connectionalism. (2) The battle between state and national agencies as revealing the need for an entirely new national structure for the Disciples.

Parker Rossman  
United Christian  
Missionary Society  
Indianapolis, Indiana

In response to your question regarding the purpose and future of the Campbell Institute, I do not have a ready answer to your question. Twenty years ago, the Institute served a two-fold function for me. First it provided the opportunity for a free exchange of ideas in a permissive atmosphere where a person could express “heretical” ideas without fear of being “excommunicated”. Secondly, it provided for a fellowship with the men of the Disciples Divinity House.

As far as I am personally concerned, I do not feel the need for the Institute as far as the first purpose is concerned. I seem to have more opportunities than I can take advantage of for exchanging ideas in a permissive atmosphere. Whether this is because the climate of the brotherhood has changed sufficiently to permit a free exchange of “heretical” ideas without fear of “excommunication” or because, in my old age, I no longer have heretical ideas, I cannot say. All I am sure of is I no longer feel the need for the Campbell Institute as an avenue for exchanging ideas in a permissive atmosphere.

The second function of the Institute is still a valid one for me. In this it serves largely as an alumni association for the Disciples Divinity House. Whether this is a sufficient reason for keeping it alive I cannot say, but if this is what it is to be, then it should be just that. When I try to think more positively about what the Institute should be doing, I do not come up with anything very satisfactory. I have thought of it as providing an opportunity for “forefront” thinking for the brotherhood—a sort of “Whither Disciples” fellowship. As far as the brotherhood is concerned, this need seems to be rather well cared for through the newly formed panel of scholars, but the Institute might well serve as a channel for the consideration of the questions involved by a larger group of people. I have thought of the Institute as providing for an exchange



of the results of scholarly thought and research on the part of Disciple scholars. This need seems to be met through the various learned societies. I have thought of it as providing, through the Scroll, an avenue for the publication of scholarly papers and the like, but the various publications of the seminaries seem to provide an avenue for this, at least for the professors. And so it has gone. Everything I have thought of except the idea of the Institute's channel for considering the future of the brotherhood by a larger group than a panel of scholars seems to have been taken care of in some other fashion.

Myron Taggart Hopper  
The College of The Bible  
Lexington, Kentucky

The Scroll is the organ which keeps the comrades of the House in touch with one another. Fellowship of the printed page replaces the fellowship we experienced as residents of a wonderful institution. This fellowship stimulates the urge to start writing and helps keep alive interest in active scholarship. Though we are separated by the miles of our country and cannot always attend the Institute meetings, it is possible to keep up with our Comrades through the pages of the Scroll.

Richard L. James  
Riverside Avenue  
Christian Church  
Jacksonville, Florida

I have been a member of the Institute since Miami, 1954: I am much interested in our brotherhood's having a "cutting edge". I would like to see the Institute do this, especially in the realm of ecumenicity brought to the local level. We have plenty of "ecumaniacs" when we gather at conventions, etc., we need some "head-knocking" and soul-searching on the local level, between and within congregations.

Academic and pulpit freedoms are endangered, both by men rationalizing themselves out of prophetic courage, and the subtle outside influences.

Bob Chambless  
First Christian Church  
Russellville, Arkansas

Your post card of February 14 finally swam ashore just the other day. Fortunately it didn't wait on the boat, or it never would have reached me. We do get some of our mail a little quicker by carrier pidgeon. For two

cents more you could have sent it air mail, and I might have received it in March instead of April. Now let me put my daggers back in their sheaths and give you a civil but belated answer to your query.

I do not feel loquacious and I haven't the slightest idea whether or not Campbell Institute has any "purposes, intents, or future" or not. But whatever you do, keep the Scroll coming. If it serves as an organ of expression for men who have something to say, it's worth any sacrifice to keep going.

Let me give my testimony. I was downhearted. I was considering suicide. And to translate a Guarani expression so common here, I was like a burned match. Church attendance was down, I was faced with problems that even a Seminary professor would find difficult to put in words. Then I managed to get the latest copy of the SCROLL from my wife and I saw the answer to my dilemma. It was J. Van Boskirk's article, "The problem of the Inner City Church." Well, I figured, if J.J. has my problem in Chicago, perhaps his Chicago solutions and strategies would work in Asuncion. I haven't been able to solve all the problems of the inner city church of Asuncion, but at least I don't consider suicide any more and church attendance is picking up. I am grateful to the Campbell Institute and the Scroll for making available to me the experiences of the thinkers of our brotherhood. Perhaps other ministers have profited by something they read in the Scroll.

Oh yes, I want to say a word about another "contributor", F.E. Davison. Being a Hoosier, I'm partial to Hoosier contributors. Especially when they are F.E. Davison. I enjoy his humorous style, and his philosophical attack on the problems of life. I think, however, the most important contribution of this contributor is his revelation of what retired ministers do with their years of retirement. I used to think of retirement as just one step from the grave, but now (thanks to F.E. Davison) I am beginning to feel that a man is just at the prime of his life when he retires.

I shall be looking forward to the next issue of the Scroll, hoping to see in print what others think is the basic rationale for the existence of the Campbell Institute.

Byron Spice  
Asuncion, Paraguay

I think the Campbell Institute thru its public meetings and THE SCROLL should play the role of the gad-fly to the Disciples. One of the most serious, evil consequences of the "independent" movement is that

responsible criticism of our traditions and institutions is virtually non-existent. The fear is rife that any criticisms will be used against us as "admissions of guilt".

The Campbell Institute should not bow to this popular pressure. Sacred cows are not the symbols of a progressive society.

At the head of the list of our traditions which should be re-evaluated, I would place (1) our conception of the ministry, and (2) the idea of congregational autonomy.

The fact that anti-clergy jokes are a prominent form of levity among us, especially at "laymen's" rallies, indicates the esteem in which we hold the office. It may also hint at the reason so few Disciples' works are included in anthologies of best sermons, etc. Truly, the minister is God's Forgotten Man among us. Robert Beck thinks the ministers should have an organization similar to the American Association of University Professors. He doubtless has an article stored up in his soul about it.

I'd like to elicit some discussion on my point that our congregationalism should be altered in the direction of a presbyterial system at the points of (1) calling and discharging ministers and (2) holding title to local church property.\*

Yours in defiance of complacency,  
J.J. Van Boskirk  
Chicago 3, Illinois

\*See THE SCROLL, Fall 1956.

A means of expression of the thinking and ideals of the open-minded and progressive ministers and scholars of the communion known as Disciples of Christ. A means of fellowship in the common heritage of those who believe in the progress and adjustment to changing conditions of the Christian cause.

Stephen J. Corey  
Santa Monica, California

## Editorial Meanderings

I have been asked by the Percival Company of New York and London to conduct a Winter Sunshine Tour of the Holy Land, beginning December 14th and ending January 11th. I am taking the liberty of enclosing a brief mimeographed explanation of the proposed tour. It may be that some of the Comrades of the Institute would like to take this tour with us. Knowing something about the income of preachers and teachers, may I suggest that clever presentation to one's Official Board might bring an offer from your Boards that this is the appointed time—between wars!—to take a trip in the area which is likely to be the Armageddon of diplomatic fencing. Anyway, it is an opportunity to make a trip to a very crucial area, and I humbly call the opportunity to your attention.

Editors in general are very likely to become the targets for bouquets and brickbats; sometimes thrown indiscriminately! Some of the readers of the SCROLL in recent months have written to me favorably, saying that they appreciate some of the articles and the emphases. Others have written less favorably. Some have been downright snide in their remarks. All of this is a calculated risk that one assumes when he becomes the editor of anything—even a high school newspaper! This editor takes all of this as a part of the day's work and rather much in his stride. Even so, we all like approval of our work, and I am glad when you brilliant readers like what goes into this significant journal. One may be very sure, however, that articles will not be accepted, nor will editorializing be made only on the presumption that "everyone will like this." If SCROLL readers are mature, the more provocative an article is, the more readable it should be and the more ready acceptance it should have in this kind of a journal. Very few matters of the intellect are important if they are not controversial! If you do not like what appears in the SCROLL, take yourself out of your armchair, put down that golf club, get into your *inner sanctum* and turn out something which you do like and send it to me.





# THE SCROLL

The Journal of the Campbell Institute

## **ECUMENICAL NEXT STEPS FOR THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST**

**W. Barnett Blakemore**

## **A PRICELESS CITIZENSHIP**

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## **EDITORIAL MEANDERINGS**

# Ecumenical Next Steps For The Disciples of Christ

W. B. Blakemore, Chicago, Illinois

There are two directions in which Disciples of Christ may take their ecumenical next steps. This article is written to clarify those two directions and, in conclusion, to indicate the writer's opinion regarding the best next steps for our Brotherhood.

The two major ecumenical directions within North American Protestantism are the conciliar movement and denominational merger. The thesis of this article is that conciliarism has been the ecumenical direction which historically has been best suited to the Disciple genius and to which we have made exceedingly successful contributions. The indications are that it is through the conciliar movement rather than through denominational merger that Disciples can best promote Christian unity in the future.

The term "conciliar movement" refers to the development since 1900 of state, national and world councils of churches. It refers particularly to the tremendous increase of local and metropolitan councils since 1945. In 1958 there are approximately 1000 local councils of churches in the United States of America. In an article entitled "Councils Challenge Denominations" in the *Christian Century* of December 4, 1957, I made a point that the rise of the conciliar movement marks the emergence of the third great period in American church history. The first period of American church history was characterized by the various patterns of establishment and dissent found in the colonies. The second period, instituted when the Constitution separated church from state, has been the denominational system. The third period is proving to be not an amalgam of the denominations into a few large denominations, but a more radical modification in which the denominational system will be counterbalanced by another type of system altogether, namely, a conciliar system. Furthermore, when the full story of the emergence of this third period of American church history is written, I believe it will be clear that the Disciples of Christ played a major role in bringing it about. Our conciliar instinct far outweighs whatever muteness we may have in faith and order discussions. In other words, our efforts in behalf of the conciliar movement will be proven to have been a great ecumenical contribution while our efforts at denominational merger will have much less ecumenical value.

### *The Disciples and the Councils*

At the present time, the Disciples of Christ are as fully committed as any communion to the conciliar movement. This means that as a Brotherhood we hold membership in the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches. Through our state societies we hold membership in state councils wherever we are populous and through church or ministerial associations we hold membership in large numbers of local councils. There may be a few instances in which our local congregations have held back from entering federations. But typically, as was the case when the Federal Council of Churches was formed, the Disciples have been in from the beginning. Typically also we have been willing to give leadership and enthusiasm to conciliar enterprise. It has been pointed out frequently (almost too frequently perhaps) that a major contribution of our Brotherhood to the ecumenical movement has been that spirit of unity which has enabled so many of our folk to give leadership in the councils. We need not re-iterate here a list which, for our day, would be headed by R. G. Ross and J. W. Harms, and which includes such names as Ainslie, Edgar DeWitt Jones, W. E. Garrison and C. C. Morrison. If we mention our Disciple participation in World Service and in such enterprises as the publication of the *History of the Ecumenical Movement* it is only to point out the depth of our commitment to the conciliar movement.

### *The Disciples and Denominational Mergers*

In the matter of denominational mergers, the Disciples are interested, but unable to become committed because no clear possibility of merger has yet come into view. Perhaps such a possibility is in the making as the new United Church of Christ emerges, but in that respect there is still a great deal of ground to explore.

During the late 1940s and early 1950, the Disciples were involved in conversations looking toward reunion with the Baptists. Ever since the "Campbellites" dissolved the Mahoning association in 1830, there have been periodic conversations looking toward such a reunion. But the conversations have always broken down, and by 1952 it was apparent that the same end would come for the latest series of conversations. The Disciples came away from these talks feeling they had been rebuffed by a Baptist disinterest, and there may be something of rebound in the interest which Disciples currently show toward the new United Church of Christ.

Furthermore, as we move into 1958, it is obvious that it is no longer realistic to invest practical hopes in the "Greenwich Plan." The Greenwich Plan has been of great usefulness in furthering all sorts of ecumenical conversations, and was a subject of major consideration at the 1957



Oberlin Conference on Faith and Order. But in so far as Disciples have wanted to treat the "Plan" as a live option they now discover that no one else is really seriously interested at the moment. Disciples are therefore left with a certain capital of ecumenical concern for re-investment, and the new United Church of Christ looks like it may prove a blue chip stock. It should be pointed out, of course, that the International Convention as long ago as 1947, voted for conversations looking toward merger with the United Church of Christ, if and when that body came into being. Interest in the United Church of Christ is therefore not all rebound. But in 1958 we are, so far as denominational merger is concerned, considerably deflated from the situation of 1951. In 1951 we were being told that within a decade or twenty years we would be confronted with a serious proposal for merger, and we were being asked, "Are you really ready?" In 1951 we were looking forward to holding our convention in Chicago concurrent with the American Baptist Convention. We were eagerly awaiting the publication of early forms of the Greenwich Plan by the Conference on Church Union. As a third possibility—and in 1951 it looked like a very weak third—we had our expressed interest in the United Church of Christ. But in 1951, the emergence of that church was blocked by the then recent Steinbrink decision. Yet by 1958 the two strong contenders of 1951 are dead issues, and what seemed like a weak third has moved into the position of the only hope of the moment.

### *Disciples Breast Beating*

When we survey this history it is curious to discover some Disciples who are beating their breast, and doing it not in frustration but in penitence! In penitence for what? In penitence for not having yet entered upon a denominational merger!!! Such "penitence" would imply that at several times in the past Disciples have been faced with a live option for merger which they have rejected. But that has never been the case despite the fact that Disciples have been in a variety of conversations looking toward merger. Therefore we are left wondering what the breast-beating is all about. The editor of the *SCROLL* in the Fall, 1957, issue says, "We give evidence of failing to believe in our own stated convictions! For a century and a quarter "the time has been premature." Will the accomplished days ever arrive? Some of us are beginning to doubt if the Disciples of Christ have ever had or ever will have a genuine interest in effecting a union with *any* other Christian organization! We are religious cowards who are afraid to look squarely in the face the implications of religious union with anyone. How long, O Lord, how long?"

The mood and temper of that statement is only an extension of an attitude which the editor of the *Christian Century* reports in the issue for October 30, 1957. "It was pointed out (at Campbell Institute sessions in

Cleveland) that the union of churches of Christ (forming the United Church of Christ) has not taken place on a basis which compels Disciples to act or else abandon the pretense that Christian union is really important to them." Further on in the editorial it is remarked that the Disciples have little advantage as they come to that self-examination which will be necessary before merger with the Church of Christ is effected. "The Disciples' only advantage is that they have had an opportunity to study the problems and the mistakes made by all the people who have begun to practice what the Disciples have preached for so long."

But the "Why don't you practice what you preach" attitude toward Disciples is becoming very weary and worn-out as that kind of historical summary so often made of us which runs, "Their battle-cry was 'Back to Bible Christianity and unite all the Churches of Christ on the basis of that Christianity.' While they sincerely preached and stood for these principles, they became, unfortunately, not a rallying point for unity, but one more denomination competing upon the American scene."

But the attitudes expressed in the last two paragraphs imply that church unity is to be identified with denominational merger. Is it?

#### *Mergers will Aggrandize Denominationalism*

Actually, denominational mergering, in and of itself, will prove a dead-end instead of the road to Christian unity. The idea that denominational mergers contribute toward Christian unity is only partially true. They may contribute toward Christian unity if the ideal of Christian unity is kept vividly alive within the new entity. But the idea that these mergers are a great contribution to Christian unity rests on the false assumption that there will some day be a complete merger of every sect into one church. Short of that ultimate—and eschatological—goal, denominational mergers result only in larger denominations. Indeed, denominational mergering is more likely to preserve denominationalism than to transcend it. Short of the improbable goal of complete merger, the process of denominational mergering leaves denominationalism standing and enhanced. Merger will save weak sects from extinction because it provides bigger and stronger sects for them to be absorbed into. The problem is not to abolish this or that sect, but to modify the denominational system. We could cut the number of denominations in half—their number could even be decimated—and the remaining denominations, ten times fewer in number, but ten times as large and strong would be more denominationalistic than ever. The denominational system would still be intact.

The fallacy in supposing that merger is the major road to Christian unity is the failure to recognize that merger does not radically alter

what Dr. C. C. Morrison has called the churchism of the denominations. Mergers, far from recovering from the denomination those things which belong to the church as a whole, create larger and stronger denominations which guard more jealously the usurped churchly prerogatives. The larger the denomination, the more easily it may decide to do as much as it can alone and to unite only for those activities in which united effort cannot be avoided. The larger the denomination, the greater its sense of security as denomination.

The implication of denominational merger is ultimately a single church. In a speech given October 22, 1957, as reported in the Ecumenical Press Service of November 1, 1957, Dr. Geoffrey Fisher, Archbishop of Canterbury said that if the Church could speak with one united voice, thrones and crowns might falter. But, he warned, power is dynamite. "You can also realize what a terrible danger we ourselves could be in. I mean this sincerely, because if we were all one and united, the danger of the freedom to differ from the majority in power would be threatened, and there has always been in this history of the world a great value in minorities and differences of opinion. Please God some day there will be a united Church—in some sense united."

We should remind ourselves that Alexander Campbell used to say that he was not preaching for the union of sects but for the unity of Christians. The uniting of sects, Campbell realized, might lead only to bigger sects. What he was seeking was a basis on which Christians can unite.

### Councils can Challenge the Churchism of Denominations.

If larger and larger denominations would only result in an entrenched churchism, the development of councils offers a different hope. If North American Protestantism comes to be characterized by a denominational system radically modified by an extensive conciliar system, there will exist a series of checks and balances whereby those functions which belong in ideal to the Church of Christ will be shared by two juxtaposed orders. The conciliar structure, at each of its several geographical reaches—local, district, state, national and world—will represent the wholeness and integrity of the Church in a manner other than that in which the denomination represents the wholeness of the Church. The councils will provide structures into whose comprehensive hands there can be placed some of the churchly functions now divisively usurped by the denominations. Just what interchanges should take place will have to be worked out prayerfully in the future, but it is the establishment of this conciliar counter-balance to denominationalism which is emerging as the next great stage for North American Protestantism.



### *Next Steps For Disciples*

There is no reason why Disciples should not continue their conversations with the new United Church of Christ. But they would be very deliberate—and certainly they should not prejudge the case and blind their own reason by asserting that “the union of churches of Christ has now taken place on a basis which compels Disciples to act or else abandon the pretense that Christian union is really important to them.” If Christian Union is important to the Disciples, they will make very sure that taking a step along one of the directions which may become available does not later prevent them from moving even further toward unity in another direction. The editor of the *Christian Century* is right when he says that before we decide to unite we better find out who we are. We had also better find out what the new United Church of Christ is. We must be deliberate lest once again we prove sudden swains sighing for consummations which the other parties devoutly do not wish.

Meanwhile, the conciliar road, whose engineering has already received major contributions from Disciples of Christ, is being enlarged. The greatest achievements by Disciples, in the future as in the past, will be made through the conciliar movement—at every level. It is the emergent structure which holds promise of bringing about that withering of denominationalism which will lead to the transcending of denominationalism. There are two ecumenical directions ahead for the Disciples, and we should have some of our folk exploring each of these directions. But the exciting road ahead is not denominational merger. It is the road of conciliar development. One cannot prejudge the future, and at last I may rejoice with the rest as we join the United Church. However, if the choice in the future is between a small group pleading for unity while successfully contributing to a conciliar movement and a fine large denomination secure enough to soft-pedal the need for Christian unity, the former will be the better by far, even though it is still constantly berated for not practicing what it preaches.

(The article above by W. Barnett Blakemore is thought-provoking in a disconcerting and uncomfortable manner! Every paragraph could require dissection, examination, and then some degree of approbation or dissent. If one accepts his major premises, then he is bound to accept his conclusions. These premises must be examined carefully. It is not enough simply to agree or disagree with the conclusions which are reached. If this kind of article does not excite interest, pro and con, among the Campbell Institute members, it would indicate that the members are simply not reading carefully the implications of such articles, or they are dead! Let's have some written reactions!—Ed.)



# A Priceless Citizenship

*E. K. Higdon, Quezon City, Philippines*

One day a colonel in the army and a preacher of the Gospel had a conversation that so impressed the preacher that he told a doctor friend about it. (The Physician recorded it in a book he wrote a few years later.) A mob in Jerusalem had seized him, when he was in the temple, St. Paul wrote, had dragged him out and were on the point of killing him. A colonel rescued him and had his troops take him into a barracks where the colonel commanded another officer to give him a preliminary hearing in the usual way. That was to whip him, in order to find out whether he was guilty of any crime. When they had bound him, Paul said to the officer, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a Roman citizen?" The officer went at once to his superior and asked him, "What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman citizen." The colonel, alarmed, hurried to Paul and said, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?" Paul replied, "Yes." Then the officer exclaimed in surprise, "I bought this citizenship for a large sum." Paul said, "But I was born a citizen." So the colonel released him and arranged for him to have a fair trial.

Both men were proud of their citizenship. The colonel had paid cash for his freedom. St. Paul was born free. A man who had paid for his freedom might still have been bound by a slave mentality or, as an officer in the army of that day, might have been overbearing in the exercise of authority or harsh and cruel in human relations. A free-born citizen of the Roman Empire might have become a slave to social custom or to religious tradition or to intellectual confusion or to moral delinquency. But both the Christian and the colonel remained free. (Acts 22:22-30). They were intelligent citizens.

Education should prepare men and women for intelligent citizenship. Intelligent citizens are also free men. I refer not merely to any one freedom, but to the sum of all freedoms, to human freedom. Such freedom is expensive and some citizens are unwilling to pay the price for it.

It is customary these days to speak of the free world in contrast to the world that isn't free. Your country and mine belong to the free world. However, if the nations of the free world are to remain free, so as to win in the struggle against Fascism and Communism, citizens of those nations must pay the price for freedom. Both Filipinos and Americans have paid a large sum, a bloody price, you more recently than we. At all cost we must maintain our human freedom.

St. Paul's pride in his Roman citizenship gives a special point to

what he wrote to a group of Christians in the city of Philippi. He said: "... Many have their minds set on earthly things. But our commonwealth is in heaven. We are citizens of Heaven: our outlook goes beyond this world." Consider these sentences together with what he said about his birth. "I was born a citizen." "We are citizens of heaven; our outlook goes beyond this world." I submit two propositions suggested by these statements: First, education for citizenship must make men free; and second, the Christian has a priceless citizenship, a higher loyalty than love of country, a citizenship that refines and exalts patriotism.

What is involved in human freedom? First, freedom to think creatively. Unfortunately, not all university students have earned this freedom. Universities are always in danger of becoming factories. Young persons enter as raw material and after four years or more come off the assembly lines as R.C.A., Victors, Edisons, Philcos, Zeniths, Columbias, or Magnavoxes High Fidelity—either equipped with recordings also made in the factory or ready to tune in and accept whatever is on the air. That kind of education will not do for our day. If we cherish our citizenship, we must win the freedom to think. For example, as citizens of this Republic, what can you contribute to the kind of international relationships that must obtain, if this or any other nation is long to endure? Theo F. Lentz points out in his recent book "The Science of Peace," that even cooperation within nations today has become, under the stress of war and preparations for war, cooperation for antagonism among nations. He says, "We misorganize when we organize to antagonize one another." Furthermore, he claims that the gifts of science have come to us in the wrong order. For "we sought out the mysteries of atoms. We have ignored or trifled with the mystery of attitudes." Here is an area for creative thought. One man who understands even a part of the mystery of interpersonal relationships influences millions and One who knew thoroughly the hearts and minds of men changed the course of the ages. You need not be reminded, only three weeks after his tragic death, that the secret of Ramon Magsabay's place in the affections of the Filipino people was his understanding of the "mystery of attitudes." His sympathy with the common man came from profound insight into human need, sympathy born of experience, and fearless, independent thought. And because he sought a peaceful Aisa and a free world, he cultivated the friendship and won the respect of the heads of democratic nations. It is no wonder that his death is mourned in every land where human personality is held sacred and universal peace is the aim of men of good will. Magsabay developed freedom to think. If you have not yet won that freedom, your value as a citizen of this republic is way below par and you have not yet taken out your first citizen papers for that higher citi-

zenship, your membership in God's commonwealth, your priceless citizenship.

Furthermore, education should produce citizens who have freedom to act adventurously. For illustration consider the practice of love in human conflicts. Love is the law of life. Jesus summarized all the commandments in the words: "... you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength . . . You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Mt. 12:30, 31). Christian love is more than soft sentimentality or wishful dreaming. It took Jesus to the stern reality of the Cross. Men practice it today, endangering their lives for high purposes. Three such men have recently received the 1956 Social Justice Awards of the National Religion and Labor Foundation. The Reverend John La Farge, S. J. Senator Herbert N. Lehman of New York, and the Reverend Martin Luther King—an eminent Catholic, a Jewish statesman and a Protestant Negro. The citation said, "All three have made significant contributions in the fight for racial equality."

The picture of King, the Negro minister, was on the cover of a recent issue of *Time* magazine and there was also a feature article about him. Although he is a Ph. D. from Princeton University, he was unknown a little more than a year ago outside his parish, the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. He, like Mohandas Gandhi, has placed the world in his debt by demonstrating in an explosive situation the techniques and the spirit of non-violence. In Montgomery this 28-year old quiet-spoken scholar conducted a year-long boycott of the transit company and won for his people the right to occupy any vacant seat on any public vehicle in the city. They repealed the Jim Crow law. But they did more than that. King is an expert organizer and administrator. He defeated the city officials in the courts, even though he was falsely arrested for speeding, was thrown into jail on other charges, was annoyed, insulted and threatened by telephone calls; and finally had his house damaged by bombs. After the bombing in an address to a mass meeting of Negroes, Dr. King said:

"Christian love can bring brotherhood on earth. There is an element of God in every man. No matter how low one sinks in racial bigotry, he can be redeemed . . . The strong man is the man who can stand up for his rights and not hit back."

Dr. King, writing on "Nonviolence and Racial Justice," discusses five characteristics of the methods he and his colleagues used. Non-violence is not the method of cowards; it *does* resist. It seeks to win the opponent's friendship and understanding, not to defeat or humiliate him.



Attack is directed against forces of evil rather than against persons who are caught in those forces. It avoids not only external physical violence but is based on the conviction that the universe is on the side of justice. It is appropriate here, to quote King's exact words:

"This belief that God is on the side of truth and justice comes down to us from long tradition of our Christian faith. There is something at the very center of our faith which reminds us that Good Friday may reign for a day, but ultimately it must give way to the triumphant beat of the Easter drums. Evil may so shape the events that Caesar will occupy a palace and Christ a cross, but one day that same Christ will rise up and split history into A.D. and B.C., so that even the life of Caesar must be dated by his name."

The freedoms to think creatively and to act adventurously are not the only freedoms we need as citizens of free nations. Our education should make us worthy of academic freedom, and should give us freedom from immediate self-interest, freedom from moral neutralism, freedom from the illusion that mankind can achieve its destiny only through the social unit of the nation-state, freedom from fears of any kind, and a deep concern for civil liberties for all. In the words of that army officer, "This is an expensive citizenship. It costs 'a large sum'."

My second proposition is that the Christian has a priceless citizenship, a higher loyalty than love of country. It supplements and purifies his patriotism. It does not for a moment cancel the sound doctrine of separation of state and church. This fact needs emphasis in every age but our time presents a challenge to Christianity that makes compulsory the teaching of this profound truth. This principle of the higher loyalty, the priceless citizenship, the membership in the Commonwealth of God strengthened the faith and stiffened the courage of the early Christians when they had to choose between Christ and Caesar. At that time the Christian had to decide whether he had any existence apart from his existence as a citizen of the state. And he made his decision known either by burning incense to Caesar or refusing to do so and thus running the risk of himself being burned—or thrown to the lions. Today that is once more the central issue—Christ or the nation-state? When a nation-state becomes the god of the people, all higher loyalties go into the discard. Louis XIV may not have declared, "I am the State," But he believed in the divine right of kings. Today the nation says "I am the State." And now it is the divine right of government.

What the early Christians did about this conflict of loyalties is recorded in interesting detail by the unknown writer of the Epistle of



Diognetus. He wrote probably in the second century of the Christian era when Christianity was still young:

"For Christians are not distinguished from the rest of mankind either in locality or in speech or in custom. For they dwell not somewhat in cities of their own, neither do they use some different language, nor practice an extraordinary kind of life . . ." . . . the constitution of their own citizenship, which they set forth, is marvelous, and confessedly contradicts expectation . . . Every foreign country is a fatherland to them, and every fatherland is foreign . . .

"Their existence is on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven. They obey the established laws, and they surpass the laws in their own lives. They love all men, and they are persecuted by all . . .

"In a word, what the soul is in the body, this the Christians are in the world. The soul is spread through all the members of the body, and Christians through the diverse cities of the world. The soul hath its abode in the body, and yet it is not of the body. So Christians have their abode in the world, and yet they are not of the world."

And the author adds that these Christians are scattered throughout the world and they hold the world together. Isn't that one of the functions of Christians today? Someone has said, "The liberal democratic idea of liberty was freedom from restraint. The Christian idea of liberty is positive responsibility—not imposed from above but accepted in a position of relationship." We have to live in relationships. "Nations like persons can become ethical only in relationship. A world of national egos expanding in isolation is essentially an immoral world, and sooner or later the god of war, who is the incarnation of all immoralities, will take charge and conduct humanity to the arena in which these national egos, like bloated monsters, will put on a spectacle of the latest scientific technique and the most brilliant administrative skill in organizing mass slaughter as an edifying expression of the inner meaning of modern civilization." And that, mind you, was written in 1934! (Francis P. Miller, *The New Religion of Nationalism*, in "The Christian Message of the World Today").

The question is: Shall our relationships be narrowly national or shall we pay the price of that higher citizenship that is supra-national and supra-racial, membership in the Republic of God? The Christian community and the totalitarian state represent social loyalties that can never be reconciled. The statesmen of the world have recognized this fact. Woodrow Wilson once said what many of them would endorse: "If I did not believe that the moral judgment would be the last judgment, the final judgment, in the minds of men as well as the tribunal of God, I could

not believe in popular government." But Wilson did believe in popular government—and so do we because we know that the citizens of a true democracy may have a dual loyalty, an *expensive* citizenship in the nation and *priceless* citizenship in the Commonwealth of heaven.

If some of you lack either, it is not too late to earn it. For this isn't the end. It is the beginning. And you might well say about your education what G. A. Studdert-Kennedy wrote about life:

It is not finished, Lord.  
There is not one thing done.  
There is no battle of my life  
That I have really won.  
And now I come to tell Thee  
How I fought to fail.  
I cannot read the writings of the years;  
My eyes are full of tears.  
It gets all blurred and won't make sense.  
It's full of contradictions  
Like the scribblings of a child.  
I can but hand it in, and hope  
That thy great mind, which reads  
The writing of so many lives,  
Will understand this scrawl  
And what it strives  
To say—but leaves unsaid.  
I cannot write it over.  
The stars are coming out.  
My body needs its bed.  
I have no strength for more,  
So it must stand or fall, dear Lord!—  
That's all.

# The Treatment of Religion in Recent Introductory Texts in Philosophy

Bert C. Williams, Orange, California

Nine years ago the Hazen Foundation and the Committee on Religion and Higher Education of the American Council of Education sponsored a volume, *College Reading and Religion*,<sup>1</sup> composed of thirteen chapters each dealing with a major college discipline and written by a specialist within the field. The whole was an attempt to evaluate the treatment of religion in college texts.

The chapter on "Problems of Philosophy" was written by Peter A. Bertocci of Boston University and included a series of criteria by which introductory texts in philosophy should be judged. They must "explain the essential scope and meaning of the Hebrew-Christian standpoint, without disregarding other influential religious world views."<sup>2</sup> Specifically this means "the belief in a Being, independent of man, who is the ultimate Source and Conserver of existence and values . . . a person."<sup>3</sup> The nature and attributes of this God, arguments for and against God, the case for human freedom, the case for personal immortality, the philosophical conclusions and ethical attitudes to which religious belief leads must be expounded.

This paper attempts to continue the earlier study by examining in the light of its criteria six texts which have appeared within the present decade. Their treatment of religion will be briefly summarized, their adequacy judged, and certain conclusions noted.

Louis O. Kattsoff in *Elements of Philosophy*<sup>4</sup> attempts to meet the need for "a general, philosophic introduction to the meanings of ideas and . . . the methods of critically analyzing and evaluating them."<sup>5</sup> This analytic approach is well illustrated in a chapter devoted to "The Religious Problem" which revolves about answers to six questions. 1. What is meant by "religion"? "A religion *expresses* a set of behavior patterns and beliefs as to the highest and best values; it concerns itself with enumerating and explaining them and not with justifying them, except in a secondary sense."<sup>6</sup> 2. What is meant by the word "God"? Some characteristic adjectives used to modify the word "God" are noted, and it is pointed out that these terms applied univocally to God are difficult to accent—e.g., the notation of God as "father" or "creator." Addi-

tional problems include the reconciliation of an unchanging God and the act of creation, the reconciliation of an all-good and all-powerful God with the problem of evil, the affirmation of the existence of a God whose nature is beyond human knowledge. 3. What is meant by "God exists"? This means that "God is real"—that "there is a being God, having certain properties."<sup>7</sup> 4. What is the evidence for the existence of God? The ontological, psychological, cosmological, teleological, moral, and probability arguments are stated, but none of these is said to be logically valid since they all make dubious assumptions. 5. What are some of the solutions to the problems in philosophy of religion? Ayer's positivism, Dewey's naturalism, Brightman's empiricism, and Hocking's idealism are all briefly described. To his last question, 6. How do we know facts about God? Kattsoff gives no specific answer but points out that here we return to the basic problem of all philosophy, "How should one conceive reality?"

Archie J. Bahm's *Philosophy, An Introduction*<sup>8</sup> devotes a chapter to philosophy of religion which is defined as the "scientific study of religion" the general problem of which is "to discover the nature of religion" and investigate its "various characteristics and problems."<sup>9</sup> The discussion is organized about answers to a series of questions. Belief in God is not essential to religion since the essence of religion is the feeling of oneself as an intrinsic part of a larger whole or the awareness of duty to oneself as involving a duty to some higher intrinsic value in which he actually partakes. As to the truth of religion Bahm holds that "all objects, including religious objects, have both realistic and subjectivistic aspects, such that the existence and nature of God cannot be either wholly explained or wholly denied either on realistic or subjectivistic bases alone."<sup>10</sup> The origin of religion is best accounted for by seeing it "as involving an interaction between the inner and outer that requires constant mutual readjustment between them."<sup>11</sup> Worship as "an appreciative attitude toward, or an actual enjoyment of values"<sup>12</sup> and ritual as some form of means are both essential to religion. Salvation as "the saving or conserving of what is good"<sup>13</sup> is analyzed into three aspects—creation and recreation, preservation, and consummation—which have received varying historical emphases. Religious values are higher in that they are "those constituting one's own higher self"<sup>14</sup> yet they must be inclusive of the lower. Religious growth and creedal adaptability are stressed, and the student warned against contempt for former values or for those persons still at home in lower stages. Religious and scientific knowledge are seen as compatible and our cultural schizophrenia lamented. The chapter concludes with a brief treatment of the God-idea as it has appeared in the Western tradition and gives a resumé of twelve arguments for God.



Hunter Mead's *Types and Problems of Philosophy—An Introduction*<sup>15</sup> is organized about the "most basic and most inclusive"<sup>16</sup> world views, idealism and naturalism. The fundamental issue between them is: "Is the world-order at heart a *mechanical* order or a *moral* order? Is the universe similar to a vast mechanism, mindless, purposeless and consequently non-moral? Or is it a moral structure, operating in terms of intelligent purpose, and in the direction of realizing values and ideals?"<sup>17</sup> Against the background of this philosophical dichotomy the chief philosophical problems are discussed.

God and immortality are dealt with in two concluding chapters. Is God transcendent or immanent? If the scientific mind believes in God at all it will regard him as identical with nature. Is God finite or infinite? An infinite God confronts us with the frying-pan of evil, attempted escape from which may land us in the fire of pantheism. A finite God is realistic in its view of evil and melioristic relative to the future and man's efforts as a co-worker with God. Both theism and deism are presented as answers to the problem of God's personality. The traditional arguments for God are critically evaluated with the moral argument most highly regarded both in the light of science and personal experience. God as an intellectual concept has little relation to direct experience—God as an emotional experience cannot be handled by language, but this "must not lead us to conclude the unreality of the experience."<sup>18</sup>

A moral world-order makes immortality logical and necessary, an indifferent universe makes the belief illogical and unnecessary. The attack on idealism's belief in immortality for being reactionary, otherworldly, and disparaging social amelioration goes unanswered, but the attack on naturalism's denial for its materialism, sensuality, and philosophy of pleasure is answered decisively. "What we can believe about God and immortality appears to be determined by what we can believe about the nature of the world in general . . . In the last analysis we believe what we can . . . each mind will have its own particular possibilities of belief."<sup>19</sup>

Philip Wheelwright's treatment of religion in *The Way of Philosophy*<sup>20</sup> revolves about the grounds for religious belief and disbelief. The anthropological objection to religious belief is attacked on anthropological grounds for overemphasizing the factor of magic in what to the participants may have been sacramental and on logical grounds for committing the genetic fallacy. The psychological objection which sees God as the projection of man's subjectivity is answered by James' emphasis upon the organic foundation of all of our states of mind. James' own theory of the subconscious as "the actual area of contact between the individual self and a higher transcendental power"<sup>21</sup> suggests a different

religious role than that assigned it by Freud and Jung. In his arguments for God's existence Wheelwright states the classical arguments and exposes their weaknesses and reformulates each to bring out its "inherent (though partial, not coercive) validity."<sup>22</sup> Thus a reformulated cosmological argument suggests "a creative power not less but greater than minds as we know them;"<sup>23</sup> a reformulated teleological argument suggests either "a purposeful but limited God" or "God as the ultimate goodness which all things emulate, although with different degrees of adequacy according to their various natures;"<sup>24</sup> Hastings Rashdall's reformulation of the moral argument is seen as having "far greater validity;"<sup>25</sup> the reformulated ontological argument sees all of our ideas as pointing beyond themselves—thus "the idea which is greater and more pervasive than all other ideas, giving greater life and richer significance to all the rest"<sup>26</sup> may well bear the mark of reality.

Robert F. Davidson in *Philosophies Men Live By*<sup>27</sup> has sought to "relate the study of philosophy to the life and problems of the student, especially to his moral and religious problems."<sup>28</sup> His text is organized about the lives and thought of some fifteen philosophers who are arranged topically rather than chronologically. Thus there are four general traditions—"The Pursuit of Pleasure" beginning with popular hedonism, passing through altruistic hedonism, and concluding with the pessimism of Schopenhauer—"The Life of Reason" as portrayed by the Stoics, Spinoza, and Walter Lippman—"The Urge of Progress" as found in the naturalism of Nietzsche, the pragmatism of James, and the naturalistic humanism of Dewey—"The Compulsion of the Ideal" as seen by Plato, Aristotle, Kant, and Niebuhr. There is a sympathetic appreciation of all points of view as containing ingredients of value. The author's own point of view is Christian idealism and it is in terms of this that all other philosophies are evaluated. Though Reinhold Niebuhr is chosen as the exponent of Christian idealism, as one who "combines in unusual fashion an appreciation of the enduring truth of the Christian faith with the recognition that to be vital and meaningful religion must deal honestly and courageously with the disturbing social problems of the world around us,"<sup>29</sup> he is also criticized from the viewpoints of conservatism and liberalism. Davidson concludes that in our search for "a philosophy that will give to human life direction, purpose, and dignity" that "no philosophy that fails to meet the deeper needs of the human spirit—those that are moral and spiritual as well as rational—will satisfy us permanently."<sup>30</sup>

Harold H. Titus' *Living Issues in Philosophy*<sup>31</sup> gives prominent place to religious interests. Thus in cosmology "if God is interpreted as the creative agency, the creative synthesis, or the élan of life that makes toward wholeness and personality, the view that God created the world is

generally accepted.”<sup>32</sup> Or “mind and life have developed in a world process which has always contained life and mind in some form.”<sup>33</sup> In anthropology “the Christian emphasis upon man as a creature whose whole life has meaning in a meaningful universe, upon the worth and dignity of each person, and upon love and social-mindedness in human relations, is sound and is very much needed in our society today.”<sup>34</sup> In metaphysics “there exists in the universe a power greater than man that makes for truth, beauty, goodness, and the development of persons” from which viewpoint “the moral and religious aspirations of the race, the Christian outlook upon life and the world, and the quest for companionship and for God are fundamentally valid.”<sup>35</sup> A similar spiritual orientation is found on other problems.

Two chapters are devoted specifically to religion. Religion had its origin in man's quest for the completion and fulfillment of life as he becomes aware of a more ideal world in which life finds meaning and significance. It is “life of a particular quality . . . the reaction of a man's whole being to his object of highest loyalty.”<sup>36</sup> The Christian convictions that the world is meaningful, that God is personal, that man is of great worth, and that in Jesus we have an expression of the creative good will at the heart of the universe that is needed for personal and social reconstruction are commended to the student. The prevalence of evil and the unscientific nature of religious belief are rejected as conclusive objections to faith in God. God is held to be immanent, lawful and orderly, intelligent and purposeful, good and beneficent. This belief is substantiated by a series of arguments, traditional and modern. The belief in God makes a difference by meeting our needs for intellectual satisfaction, emotional enthusiasm, personal stabilization, and personal and social norms of living.

On the basis of the data of this paper one may question Theodore Greene's view that “many philosophers . . . are convinced that all religious beliefs lack objective validity and that it is therefore one of the major tasks of philosophy to unmask religious pretension, discredit faith in any kind of a Deity, and develop a purely secular philosophy in which religion, at least in any of its traditional forms, has no place.”<sup>37</sup> The philosophers examined are by and large “liberal” in that they do not reflect the absolutism and dogmatism of much rationalism, physical empiricism, anti-religious humanism, and anti-metaphysical logic and semantics. They have fulfilled their philosophic responsibility in seriously considering religion. They have indicated constantly the relevance of philosophy to life and have sought to help students come to a personal and practical life and world view. If religion be thought of broadly as “man's attempt to relate himself to reality through comprehension and response”<sup>38</sup> then philosophy has moved closer to religion.



In terms of Bertocci's specific criteria these texts fall short by largely disregarding both the religions and philosophies of the Orient. Though most approach religion in terms of our Western tradition there is a hesitancy to designate it specifically as Hebrew-Christian and considerable failure to give the student an historical acquaintance with the dominant religious belief of the West—"a Being, independent of man, who is the ultimate Source and Conserver of existence and values . . . a person."<sup>39</sup> The God-idea is dealt with generally without serious consideration of any specific historical revelation. The arguments for God are largely those of tradition with little effort to indicate any modern reformulations that they may have undergone.

Immortality is inadequately handled in that it is ignored by three authors, briefly treated by two, and given an at all satisfactory account by only one. Freedom is dealt with adequately only by three of the writers. Their conclusion is a compromise position between the extremes of complete determinism and indeterminism.

All the texts deal with the problem of cosmic mechanism and teleology and the question of cosmic support for values. Solutions of the metaphysical problem vary from an implied naturalism, through a presentation of divergent points of view without making a decision, to the view that "the 'arrival of life,' human purposes, and the quest for values all appear to indicate the need for a teleological rather than non-teleological interpretation of nature."<sup>40</sup>

One misses in some of these books a sufficient concern with the philosophical implications and ethical attitudes to which religion may lead. Most of them treat religion on a theoretical and abstract level. One wonders whether religion is viable or whether it suffers any disservice to personal and social life.

A few general remarks in conclusion. 1. Students certainly need more insight into religion than that which is given in the average introductory course in philosophy to have any claim to a liberal education in this area. 2. There is need for *joint* classes in religion and philosophy departments to effectively realize their ideal relation of complementation. 3. There is a real need for philosophy majors and prospective philosophy teachers who have done some graduate work in religion so they may know how the other half lives. 4. Conversely the recommendation of the American Association of Theological Schools of Philosophy as a possible and desirable field of undergraduate concentration is a wise one with which preseminarians should be acquainted. 5. Both religion and philosophy departments could deepen insights and appreciations of their own Western traditions and escape from their Occidental provincialisms



by including courses opening up the world of Oriental philosophies and religions. 6. Ideal first-course textbooks do not exist in either the fields of philosophy or religion. There is a need—especially in our church-related colleges and seminaries—to explore curriculum procedures for studying conjointly these great areas of concern.

#### References:

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- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 28f.
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- <sup>4</sup> Kattsoff, Louis O., **Elements of Philosophy**, Ronald Press, 1953
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, iii
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 407
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 412
- <sup>8</sup> Bahm, Archie J., **Philosophy, An Introduction**, John Wiley and Sons, 1953
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 339
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 344
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 347
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 348
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 349
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 355
- <sup>15</sup> Mead, Hunter, **Types and Problems of Philosophy—An Introduction**, (revised edition), Henry Holt and Company, 1953
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, ix
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 87
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 409
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 436f.
- <sup>20</sup> Wheelwright, Philip, **The Way of Philosophy**, The Odyssey Press, 1954
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 488
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 489
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 491f.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 495
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 498
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 503
- <sup>27</sup> Davidson, Robert F., **Philosophies Men Live By**, The Dryden Press, 1952
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, v
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 411
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 451, 454
- <sup>31</sup> Titus, Harold H., **Living Issues in Philosophy** (second edition), American Book Company, 1953
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 70
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 101
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 135
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 325f.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 390
- <sup>37</sup> Greene, Theodore M., **Religious Perspectives of College Teaching—In Philosophy**, Edward W. Hazen Foundation, 5
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 39
- <sup>39</sup> Bertocci, **College Reading and Religion**, 29
- <sup>40</sup> Titus, *op.cit.*, 318

# Correspondence from Readers

Editor of *SCROLL*:

On Sunday I had occasion to refer to the Spring issue of the Scroll and read at that time the letters on "What Good Is the Campbell Institute?" As I read these letters, I recalled immediately some "notes" I had found on the Sunday previous when I was going over some of my husband's (d. Feb. 1953) papers. I got out the notes and on the spur of the moment made a copy of them and enclose them as I think you might be interested in reading them.

I would assume that the notes were made preparatory to a meeting when the question of membership in the Campbell Institute was under discussion. This must have been when my husband was working toward his doctorate or teaching at the Divinity School University of Chicago. This was before I knew him. I know that he was a reader and sometimes a writer for the Scroll in the days when Dr. Ames was the editor. I note one of the letters is from Charles' old-time friend Orvis Jordan.

After my husband's death I continued to send "the three iron men" and must tell you at this point how much I liked the Spring issue. After our marriage, I had the privilege of serving with my husband in two community Churches, so the questions of unity and ecumenicity are near to my heart. I know that Charles had been getting materials together for writing on the question of "Rethinking the Disciples," so when I read in the March issue of World Call about the Panel of Scholars to re-examine the doctrine, I was interested. Dr. Osborn's article is very illuminating.

I hope I am not being presumptuous in sending this and am not sure Charles would have wanted me to do it, but it did seem interesting to me and I thought it might be to you.

Sincerely yours

Lois B. Sharpe

To Mrs. Sharpe:

(Your husband's notes are *very* interesting. Hope you keep alive his ideals—Ed.)

#### MORE ABOUT THE CAMPBELL INSTITUTE

The Campbell Institute in its infancy filled the need for a radical swing of the pendulum away from the dominant attitude of the Disciples. This was indicated by the fact that the midnight sessions of the Campbell Institute were not recognized by the International Convention. The mood of our times has changed. We are sufficiently accepted by Brotherhood leadership that we are no longer radically different.

The major problem of our era is communication of the gospel to the ordinary church member in such a way as to cut through his legalism and his unconscious identification of Christianity with modern secularism and scientism. To work toward a solution to this problem in the Disciples' context would be a considerable contribution by the Campbell Institute and might easily define its function of our times.

A second contribution which the Campbell Institute might make is to act as the convener for a theological conference of young Disciples, similar to the Baptists' Roger Williams Fellowship Conference.

Sincerely yours,

Dale Miller

Drake University

# Editorial Meanderings

It is apparent from the records that a large proportion of the members of the Campbell Institute are not very careful about paying their dues to the Institute. One's dues for membership also entitles him to a subscription to THE SCROLL. Postal regulations prohibit a journal from sending free copies to a constituency beyond a certain prescribed limit. This announcement, therefore, is intended to warn those who have not paid their dues that this is the last issue of THE SCROLL which they will receive until they pay their just dues. There was a time not long back when the Treasurer of the Campbell Institute talked freely and cleverly about members "becoming fiscal" by "sending two iron men" to the Treasurer's office. Along with these appeals came poetry, couplets, clever prose, and other sorts of word combination which were supposed to tickle the fancy of the delinquent members and also break them loose from \$2.00 which were to be dispatched immediately to the proper office. I am not sure just what effect these readable bits of poetry, etc., did for the coffers of the Campbell Institute, but they made good reading. Perhaps we should resort to some such method now!

But this is it! Those delinquent members have had it! Kaput! If they do not pay up, they are not in good standing; they will not receive any more issues of THE SCROLL; they are warming by fires they are not willing to keep going!

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From the point of view of some of us, Edward Scribner Ames has had more profound effect upon the thinking of more Disciples than anyone in this religious movement since the time of Alexander Campbell and Barton W. Stone. While Dr. Ames is with us I should like to devote at least one entire issue of THE SCROLL to him—as a person, as a scholar, as a religious leader, as a college professor, as a Dean of the Disciples Divinity House, as a good friend. If anyone of our *Comraderie* has deep feelings about his associations with Dr. E. S. Ames, may I invite him to set down these reflections and send them to the Editor of the SCROLL.





# THE SCROLL

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EDWARD SCRIBNER AMES

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# Edward Scribner Ames

This issue of THE SCROLL is devoted almost entirely to Edward Scribner Ames. Subsequent issues will carry some hitherto unpublished materials which Dr. Ames wrote during the past thirty to thirty-five years. The following issue of THE SCROLL will also carry some further reflections and commentaries from the friends and associates of Dr. Ames.

The first part which follows, "The Great Quest—The Dawn," was written by E. S. Ames around 1940. This is the first chapter of the biography of this great man; part of the writings will be "auto—" and part will be written by members of his family. It is hoped that the entire biography will appear as a full volume sometime in the future. Perhaps nothing you ever read about Dr. Ames will portray to you a clearer picture of the child-like humility and eagerness which characterized his personal traits. Throughout all his years, childhood and into maturity and old age, he has nurtured an eagerness to obtain knowledge. He is a wise man; indeed he is a very great scholar. It never mattered, however, the mountain of information which he possessed—he was constantly seeking for further answers. As a small child might ask, "why does the ball bounce?" "What makes the sun come up?" "Why does it rain?" etc., etc., *ad-infinitum*, Edward S. Ames would ask questions; and then seek answers for those questions. Many answers he never captured, but this did not deter him from asking, over and over again.

The second part of this issue of THE SCROLL contains reflections and commentaries from the friends of E. S. Ames. You will note almost immediately that some of these statements are "dated" by their content. Some of the writers are now dead, having written their reflections in years gone by. I have been collecting these statements for almost ten years; some, indeed, are of that vintage now. They ought to make even more interesting reading in these latter days than they would if they had appeared soon after their writing. Perhaps the one trait which you will note over and above any other is Dr. Ames' capacity for deep and abiding *friendship*.

Dr. Ames was, and is, a very great man. What he has done in the area of intellectual progress for the religious and philosophical world, and the extensions he has made in the matters of human kindness, only God himself will ever know! Some believe that his influence on the thinking of Disciples, especially upon young, insipient theologues, is greater than any other person since the days of Alexander Campbell. How could one possibly measure the expanding circles of influence which E. S. Ames created?

As one person who is incalculably grateful that he came under the influence of Edward Scribner Ames, I hope fervently that these few writings about him will be only the beginning of studies which will attempt to take the measure of a Great Disciple! Sandburg, in writing about Lincoln, said that a tree is best measured after it is cut down. This can be said, of course, about any character who towers above his colleagues.

We welcome other commentaries from the Comrades of the Institute, or any of Dr. Ames' old friends. If you have some unpublished materials, letters, or documents, which might appropriately be shared by us all, please send them to me.—Ed.

## The Great Quest - The Dawn

*Edward Scribner Ames*

Since man became even dimly aware of his simplest needs and of the dangers surrounding his life he has been engaged in the great quest. Through its urgency he has built altars and temples in every land, he has written sacred books in all languages, he has danced and marched for his gods in every age, he has made himself drunk with wine and loosed all his elemental passions in a feverish hope, and again has crucified his flesh with the most terrible torments of ascetic discipline. Many have thought that the coming of civilization and especially of science would dissuade or deflect man from this quest but he only returns to it with calmer and wider vision. Vast numbers of persons still remain within the old faiths unaware of the changed world of thought. Others keep their old beliefs securely apart from their intellectual life. But a rapidly increasing company fearlessly seek to understand and to realize the most intimate religious ideals with all possible knowledge and experience. They are ready to forego some forms of consolation and of incentive, if necessary, on behalf of more practical and more consistent ideals. Such persons are unwilling to rest upon the opinion of majorities or upon the authority of long established custom. Their search is for self-evidencing and socially verifiable values.

Men who have lived in the current of the world's thought during the last fifty years and have clung to the religious life have epitomized in their personal experience a profound transformation. This inner history doubtless never has been just the same for any two individuals and still those



who have been through it will not fail to recognize a genuine spiritual kinship with any one who portrays his own. Others who are striving for clear discernment of the meaning of life and for the deeper satisfactions will find interest and perhaps encouragement in the mirror of another friendly soul's self-revelation. No unique value is claimed for the experience here recited. Whatever significance it possesses lies in its general and representative features, not in its peculiarities. Perhaps the justification for so personal and intimate a story lies in the greater interest which belongs to a concrete and intimate narrative, and in the atmosphere of reality and genuineness which the personal form of statement conveys. One's willingness to perform the task may also be some proof of the strength and value of the newer outlook attained.

I was born in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. I did not begin to realize that I was alive, however, until I found myself and my little world embedded in the village of Toulon, Illinois. I was then in my fourth year. Two or three impressions survive from the third year. The very earliest is that of breaking a tooth on a hard green peach in an orchard near Benton Harbor. Another is the mental picture of a horse the family drove. As I stood beside it the creature seemed perfectly gigantic, towering above me with its great bulk and inspiring the intensest feelings of curiosity and fear. The only other glimpse into that wonder world of infancy which I am able to identify is of a storm we encountered on Lake Michigan crossing to Chicago. I have since learned that we were aboard a little steamer, the *Corona*. Even now I seem to feel the roll of the vessel and the shuddering strain of her timbers. But most vivid of all is the deep sense of security when my father took me in his strong arms and soothed me. No symbol of a kindly providence has ever been so real to me as that simple, natural act. The waves had not ceased and all the fury of the storm still beat upon us but my father was to me a guarantee of safety against it all.

The more connected and clearly remembered events began to happen in Toulon. My father was pastor there of the Church of Disciples of Christ. Being the youngest of four children and five years younger than my brother, I was taken to Church on all occasions. In the Sunday services the music impressed me most. The leader of the volunteer choir was a stalwart farmer—John Brown. His voice was deep bass but he had the qualities of leadership and sang the hymns with a beaming face and soulful sincerity. I remember little or nothing of the Sunday School except that an organ was used. That was an important and even momentous fact for there were those who advocated its use in the church service also. A few older people cherished conscientious objections against it, however, and for a long time all deferred to them. At last a Sunday

came when the innovation was introduced into the morning service but not without dramatic effects. As the tones of the organ filled the Church, one of the aged elders who had clung hardest to the old custom, rose from his pew and walked slowly, as if with broken heart, down the aisle and out of the door. He was the type of man who has made the churches of many denominations subject to the will of small minorities. Their claims of conscience and piety have too often been allowed to hamper and obstruct the progress which equally religious and more adaptable souls have desired.

My father's sermons seem to have left no clear imprint upon my earlier years except through their quality of earnestness and lofty faith. But the Sunday dinners with parishioners, especially with those who lived in the country, were memorable occasions to a small boy. The fried chicken and the preserves and the wonderful cakes and pies, judged in terms of a healthy boy's appetite, made feasts worthy of kings. And after dinner there were excursions about the place to see the fat hogs, the sleek horses, the colts and calves, and the watchful dogs. The great hay-mows of the barns were places of mystery and adventure. There would be no keener joy than on rainy days to burrow into the hay and lie there listening to the patter on the roof, having the warmth and comfort within magnified by the thought of the cold and damp without. But the most impressive thing of all was the spirit of the people in their hearty hospitality and their religious enthusiasm. In the homes and at social gatherings there seemed to be a comradeship and friendliness of a unique quality and degree. It gave me in early childhood the feeling that religion bound people together in closer and more intimate bonds than any other interest.

My father believed in religion in the home as well as in the Church. It was our custom to have family prayers every morning after breakfast. We would read consecutive chapters, one each morning. From the time I could do so at all I took my turn reading two verses. Often the story was quite lost to me in my effort to count ahead and find the lines which would fall to me next time. When the reading was finished we sang a familiar hymn, *How Firm a Foundation*, *O Thou Fount of Every Blessing*, *Awake My Soul*, *Stretch Every Nerve*, or *Joy to the World*; Then we knelt for prayer. Father believed profoundly in prayer. It was for him the audience of the soul with God as directly and as naturally as a man talks with his friend. Nothing could be too large and nothing too small to present before his God. He prayed for the nation, for the Church, and for the speedy coming of the Kingdom of Heaven; for the sick and those in distress and for the family, for our health and success and ultimate salvation. This ritual of morning prayers was more or less irksome,

especially to us boys, but to a remarkable degree we took it as a matter of course and never tried to run away from it no matter how urgent the call of play or work. The influence of it was strengthened by our realization that it was sustained by the sincerest motives and beliefs. Sometimes I heard my father praying when alone and there came over me a kind of awe. He literally went into his closet and shut the door and prayed in secret.

But our religion had its happiest expression in singing hymns. Frequently on Sunday afternoon or during an evening the whole family would gather about the organ. Father played and we all sang. The range of his baritone voice and his knowledge of music made him an excellent leader for our little group. He never was happier than at such moments. It was our habit to begin with the first hymns in the book and sing all of our favorites to the last page. Looking back with better understanding of the responsibilities and anxieties he had to bear I am sure those hours of song meant far more than any of us children could imagine. Sometimes I noticed mother would slip aside into a chair and rock quietly as if thinking of other scenes or wondering what the years would bring to us. But her heart was entirely with us and she sang as long as her strength and voice permitted. Often at her work she hummed the same hymns softly and with almost unconscious fidelity to their spirit and meaning.

I had the good fortune to know that there were other interests and capacities in my father's character than those which could be seen in his sermons or his religious moods in the home. His religion is enhanced for me because I enjoyed other experiences more within my boyish appreciation. To others he may have seemed too serious, too preoccupied with his professional concerns. But he appeared in other lights to me. In summertime he taught me to make kites and went with me to the big pasture nearby and helped to fly them. He would become thoroughly absorbed in the sport and sent up "messages" with as much zest as any one of us. In the winter he made figure four traps which we set for rabbits. When the telephone first began to be talked of we established a line of cord from the house to the barn with tin cans at the ends and proved the possibility of transmitting sound waves to greater distance by such a contrivance.

There was genuine comfort in that plain, happy home of my childhood. Among its delights there came days when I was not quite well enough to go to school but not ill enough to be kept in bed. Then I could lie on the couch in the living room and talk with mother as she moved about her duties or I could read the stories in the back of the school read-



er which had not been spoiled yet by being given as lessons. On one such day a great event occurred. It was winter. The snow covered the ground and a driving sleet cut one's face. As I lay there in the quiet house I heard a low whine and something scratching at the door. When I opened it I found a little yellow dog, crying with cold and hunger. Mother had no heart to refuse my wish to take him in. So we fed him and got the ice out of his coat and let him lie under the stove. From that day we were fast friends. We belonged to each other. He had come to me and I had rescued him from a cold and cruel world. Who can tell what a faithful dog means to a young boy, especially to one who in spite of all love and human companionship feels that there is something lacking? He can tell things to his dog which no one else would understand. The dog will respond with secure silence and with his best caresses. So my dog Trip filled a real place in my soul and remains yet the symbol of dumb affection and good fellowship.

I do not remember any pronounced fears of those early years. The sharpest were connected with the disapproval of my parents or teachers. But I do recall great pleasure in one thing generally frightful to children. A thunderstorm induced a strange excitement but I did not feel impelled to run from it or to shut my eyes against it. I have the recollection of a powerful fascination in watching the black clouds fill the sky and seeing them swept by great sheets or chains of lightning. The booming thunder brought a kind of glee and when the rain broke over the house in torrents I revelled in the sound of it on the windows and roof. It seems to me I had imbibed a kind of fatalism which made me feel that if the lightning were to strike there was nothing I could do to ward it off. There were lightning rods on the house and we had prayed God to keep us safe and the storm was a grand sight to see!

Like every child of such environment I prayed earnestly for things I wanted. One of those prayers was never answered and a kind of aching void of unfulfilled dreams remains. That was a prayer often repeated as I fell asleep—the prayer that I might find tied to the hitching post in front of the house next morning a pony all bridled and saddled.

There were also impulses quite at variance with the prevailing mood of the household. One of these was the idea of trying to set up communication with "familiar spirits". The suggestion came from the biblical account of Saul's interview with the Witch of Endor. I teased my father by hinting to him that I thought there might be something in it and I gave the impression as nearly as I could without actually lying that I thought I had established connections with one I called "Mike". The fears of my elders centered in the danger of my becoming obsessed with that kind of



foolishness. There were times too when I drew my father into arguments about some passage in the Bible. One favorite text for this was the one which says that God had hardened Pharaoh's heart, and punished him for having a hard heart and refusing to let the children of Israel go. It was there in the Bible but it did not seem fair and does not do to this day, taken in the simple meaning of the phrases.

Considerable curiosity belonged to me and in one situation might have been the undoing of us all. In the floor of an upper room I found a knot-hole and felt a great desire to see what was down in the dark below. I smuggled matches from the kitchen, lighted one, and dropped it down that hole. It made a momentary illumination which showed the plaster through the lath and gave me some idea of how the house was put together. But I wanted more light and after having several matches go out I tried to get the whole pile to burn thinking that they would make a sufficient blaze to enable me to see the farthest corner. It never occurred to me that the house might burn down, but for some reason I regarded the performance as my secret and did not confide it to any member of the family until many years after we had removed from that home.

During these early years there were increasing tokens of the connection of our family with people in other places. Letters came from my mother's relatives in Chicago and from my father's in Wisconsin and in Boston. These were often read aloud and led to conversations about various uncles and aunts and cousins who seemed to live in a remote and consequently mysterious world. Those most frequently mentioned lived in the city and their mode and scale of life reflected a very different existence. When visits were planned they became the topics of interest for months and in our home preparations went on for weeks in anticipation of them. If my mother's sister came she brought her boy of my own age and we had rare times together in forms of play entirely new to him. One delight was to go into the garden, select a hidden spot in the tall corn where we could build an oven of bricks and make a real fire. We baked potatoes in clay and roasted ears of corn. Dressed up as Indians we lived in a dream world of mighty adventure, hunting, fighting sham-battles, gathering berries and going into the woods for nuts and slippery elm. On return visits the city was as full of novelty and excitement to me as the country had been for my cousin. The polar bear in Union Park and the strange creatures in Lincoln Park were objects of insatiable curiosity. We climbed the old water tower and gained a view of the city and the lake. But one of the most lasting memories is that of the odor of the tar used in laying the cedar block pavements. Wherever the faintest odor of tar is experienced the images of the city streets come quickly to my mind's eye.

After one or two short periods of residence in the other towns the family were settled in Davenport when I was eleven years of age. While it was larger than the other places in which we had lived the two things which impressed me most were the river and the hills. The fascination of the mighty Mississippi never lessened. A family where I often went to play lived on the bluffs overlooking miles of the valley. During the long days of the summer vacation we spent hours under the spell of that scene. Steam-boats plied up and down the river and we boys gathered about the docks to see them come in and to watch the gangs of Negroes handle the cargoes. They worked to the rhythm of their songs, deft and contented. When the cables were loosened at the capstans every boy of us felt drawn to the docks in an unspeakable longing to make the journey up or down these winding miles of beauty and surprise.

I can not forget the tragic fate of a boat which was lost in the raging waters one spring. The news spread through the city that a steamer going up stream had just passed the bridge when her engine broke and she drifted helplessly in the swift current down upon the stone pier and sank. The crew was lost. All that day at school my mind hovered over the picture of that spot and the disaster. In the late afternoon I went with other boys and stood on the bank, wondering and depressed. The feeling was the same as I had felt once before when I stood on the shore of another river and watched the angry water swirl over the place where a man and his horse had drowned the night before. In neither case did the river change its mood. It rushed on with the same roar and fury. How strange that there was no sign or change! That men had died there made no more difference to the stream than the submerging of the stray logs which had broken from some raft.

The reading of my childhood had small range. Juvenile books were not so plentiful and such fiction as could be had was under suspicion. Novels were taboo, especially *dime* novels. But in my father's library, among the commentaries and lives of the saints, I found two volumes which fed my imagination. These were the volumes of Dr. Kane's *Arctic Explorations*. How the simple wood-cuts stirred my soul. There were the great ice fields and the glaring snow, the dog sleds and the fur-covered men. The pictures bore out the stories of hardships and privation. At times unexpected openings appeared in the ice and necessitated long detours or threatened to set the party adrift in the treacherous sea. Or they had to climb sheer cliffs drawing men and dogs and sleds up icy walls to the plateau. These books gave me a sense of the possible novelty and adventure of life in places and circumstances entirely remote from my world. There arose in me unlimited admiration for the men who could undertake such deeds of heroism. From that time nothing in all the

literature of travel and exploration has had quite the same fascination and allurements as the records of arctic explorers.

Two things happened within the year before I was twelve which made deep impressions and contributed to the precipitation of a definite religious experience. One was the illness and death of my older sister's husband. They had been to Colorado and California for his health but he was brought home realizing that only a few weeks of life remained. Day after day he sat in his invalid's chair, helpless and patient, supported to the last by unflagging love and devotion. We understood that it was God's will and that no one could explain why it should be so. Here was a mystery. When he was there no longer, a shadow rested upon us. Terrible things could really happen to our family.

The other event occurred in my school experience. A fellow from the other side of town provoked me into a fight at school. He was more experienced than I and left no doubt of his victory. The Principal of the school saw that I had gotten my punishment and did not add anything to it except to send me home with a note to my parents telling them what had happened. My mother was brokenhearted. Her keen family pride was wounded beyond expression. I saw myself a base culprit for bringing such disgrace upon us all. The immediate result was a little better control of a hasty temper and a more wholesome respect for the other fellow.

In June after I was twelve I went with my father one week-end to a little town where we had lived and where he was to preach. It was a glorious Sunday. I sat by an open window in the Church and felt the beauty of the world while a religious mood deepened within me. I had already more than half decided to join the Church that day and at the close of the sermon when the customary "invitation" was given I went forward. My father was very happy and was deeply moved. That afternoon we went to the river out in the country where I had hunted and fished and swam, and was baptized. A great happiness possessed me. It was due partly to the feeling that the old sins were obliterated. Those "sins" were not great or numerous as mature souls assess them but to a shy, sensitive lad they were mighty burdens from which release was real salvation. Partly it was the realization that I had done what my parents desired but it was also the sense of having put myself right with God and the universe as I understood it. I felt a closer kinship with Christ and with all the good spirits who had fought and labored in his cause. A deep peace filled my heart as the beauty of the June day filled all the world. I had responded to a great summons. I was setting forth upon a far journey.

# Edward Scribner Ames - My Friend

## *Reflections and Commentaries on a Great Man*

Dear Dr. Ames:

Through the SCROLL I take this opportunity to join with hundreds of other members of the House my profound appreciation for the contribution you have made through your personal ministry and the leadership you have given in the Disciples House. Both the Disciples House and the University Church are in many respects the length and shadow of your great personality.

When I think of you many things come to mind, because of the imprint they made upon my life. I recall the friendly gracious manner you always had in every circumstance. I can not imagine you in any situation where you were not a Christian gentleman in the fullest sense of both terms. I remember your chats with the members of the House as you expressed your concerns about the role of the Disciples as a significant Protestant body in America. I can hear you again saying so distinctly, "I am disturbed" about this or that. Among the things that I remember so vividly and helpfully were your prayers in the University Church. I still marvel at the intimate and personal way in which you address God. Though philosophically you seem to have some reservation in describing God in the traditional personal way, there was no question about your concept of God when you prayed. I have always been impressed by the way in which you were able to integrate philosophy, psychology, theology, and religion. It seems to me that this is one of the highest achievements any Christian minister can attain. More than that you were able to integrate science and religion and I should have said that you were able to pull together psychology, philosophy, theology, religion and science in a way that few people have been able to do. This has had a marked imprint upon my own thinking and life.

So I take this occasion to thank you for what you did for me both in giving of breadth and depth of understanding so far as religion is concerned and more particularly the way in which this can be stated in the framework of the Disciples of Christ tradition. It is a joy to be able to say on such an occasion "hats off to a great Disciple of Christ, a great Christian statesman, a gentleman and a scholar."

George Earle Owens

I wish I could put on paper my estimate of Dr. Ames as a friend, a scholar, a teacher, a preacher and a Christian gentleman.



I, with many others who love and honor him, do not go along with much of his philosophy but we do stand up to salute his Christianity and his ability as a teacher and counselor.

My first personal contact with Ed Ames was when I was co-secretary of the Men and Millions Movement in 1914-1918. Early in that campaign I was in Chicago. I was not too well acquainted with our leaders and was awed by the distinction of such scholars as Dr. Ames. He invited me to have lunch with him. The impressions of that hour with him have never faded from my memory and gratitude. We have had many associations and conversations since then but agreements and differences have been qualified by the impression of kindness, understanding and broad-mindedness made on that first occasion.

For several years we were together in meetings of the Commission on Restudy of the Disciples of Christ. Here as in the sessions of the Campbell Club at International Conventions he "suffered fools" (as they must have seemed to him) gladly, or at least with patience and consideration. I did not approve the Convention of the Campbell Institute or club meetings each year in connection with our International Conventions and said so in the Christian Evangelist. Always there was a quick response from Ed Ames. He protested that the meetings were not divisive but constructive. But his protests were always kindly though vigorous. In the meeting of the Commission on Restudy he presented the liberal position in theology which he believed was the position of the Disciples of Christ. Such men on the Commission as T. K. Smith, Edwin Errett differed from him violently but stood up to say that they loved and honored him. The spirit of Ed Ames in all the discussions of widely differing points of view did more than the discussions to reconcile some of the differences and kept the Commission together in its studies and reports.

Some of his positions were shocking to the more conservative members but the sincerity, intelligence and fraternal spirit of Dr. Ames won respect if not conviction. I have the idea that in his teaching at the Divinity House what he *is* has meant more to his students than what he taught.

When my mother died, I received a letter from Ed Ames—a letter that I shall cherish as long as I live. It expressed the warm heart of the man rather than the philosophy of the critical thinker. It touched upon the human emotions of sorrow and loss rather than the philosophy of the critical thinker. It touched upon the human emotions of sorrow and loss rather than the philosophy of life and death.

I think of Ed Ames as a gentle cynic and kindly critic. He sees life with a penetrating mind that faces all the facts of experience without

timidity or fear. He challenges opposition and glories in it because he acknowledges the right of every man to think and to express his thoughts. He rises to debate like a champion and whether he wins his point with his opponent or not, he comes off the field with the respect and love of those who hear him.

We read his books and violently disagree with many of his positions and lay them down disturbed by the thought there must be something there to produce such a Christian. If he is a humanist, as many think, then he has put something into humanism which all of us need. To my mind, he is more of a Christian than even his way of thinking can produce. He has not been successful in concealing the greatness of his faith in the "simplicity which is in Christ."

What I have written may have no value for what you are planning to write about Dr. Ames. I have hoped in writing to express my love and admiration for one who has taught me more by what he is than by what he teaches.

Raphael H. Miller, Sr.

There are so many things that one could say about Dr. Ames that one scarcely knows where to start. His sense of humor is wonderful. There is an incident which I might tell you.

Some years ago Dr. Charles E. Merriam was announced to speak at the Rockefeller Chapel. Mr. Merriam had made it perfectly clear to those who asked him that he would talk on Sunday morning, provided it was not called a sermon. Anyway, he talked.

The next day he met Dr. Ames at the Quadrangle Club and said to him: "Did you notice I spoke in the big Chapel yesterday?" Dr. Ames said: "Yes, I noticed; how much did you get for it?" To which Merriam said, "Why nothing, of course." Ames, "Well, you are a scab."

Merriam and Ames have had a kind of running, bantering process. Merriam says that he and Ames had an agreement that whoever died first, the other one would say something at his funeral. And he says that this has kept Ames alive five years longer than he otherwise would have lived, because he was afraid of what Merriam would say.

Merriam spoke at the eighty-year celebration of Dr. Ames. He recounted these tales and many others. He was really tops. The whole occasion was excellent. Rabbi Mann was at this celebration and spoke, saying that he had made a great deal out of Dr. Ames' *Religion*. In fact, he said that he had read it so frequently and quoted from it so often without quotation marks that as a matter of fact Dr. Ames was a kind of informal Rabbi to his (Rabbi Mann's) congregation.

It strikes me that Dr. Ames' book *Religion* is one of the great documents of recent years. It has been reprinted several times, as you know.

Samuel C. Kincheloe

I think I ought to say that I have known Dr. Ames rather intimately for the past thirty or forty years. Our friendship has been unbroken throughout this period in spite of frequent clashes of opinion on theological and other subjects. I took most of my graduate work at Princeton where I was educated as a lotzian, and where I was also trained to regard the social interpretations of Comte, and the Durkheim School as an abomination unto the Lord. I think Ames imbibed some of these views at Yale or perhaps later in Chicago, and that they definitely influenced his thinking, hence the cleavage, in one at least, of our major points of view. There were other respects in which our ideas coincided to a remarkable degree. When I published my first book, "The Religion of Christ," (Revell, 1910), it was about the same time that Ames got out his "Divinity of Christ." Some writer in the *Century* actually double-columned passages from both books to prove their similarity. Of course, there were other passages which would have shown considerable dissimilarity if they had been brought together. It was about this time that there was considerable excitement over the Sarvis case, and Ames was brought into the picture because his church indorsed the China missionary. I can recall a public meeting in which J. B. Briney, who was one of the protagonists of the fight both against Sarvis and Ames, read a passage from the "Divinity of Christ," and after he had finished it he threw the book on the table beside him with the statement, "there goes my Savior." I recall another meeting in Indianapolis, at which Ames was present, and as was not infrequently the case he ran afowl of some of his theological friends on other issues. W. J. Lhamon launched into a vigorous prohibition speech, which Ames felt was unnecessarily vituperative. When W. J. sat down, he arose and observed that the Apostle Paul evidently took issue with the previous speaker, because it was on record that he advised his friend Timothy to drink a little wine for his stomach's sake. No sooner were the words out of his mouth, than Lhamon stood up and said, "My name is not Timothy, and there isn't anything wrong with my stomach." The audience enjoyed a good laugh in which Ames joined very heartily.

I recall riding on a day coach from Chicago to Des Moines with no companion but Ames. We argued vigorously, and had a perfectly good time. I insisted that his radical ideas were only appealing to university students, and that they would be entirely unacceptable to the masses of the people. I said something to the effect that his philosophy might attract considerable numbers of students and teachers on the Chicago campus, but that they would prove a complete failure out in the sticks.

I can still remember that in spite of the lurching of the train, Ames arose to his full six feet and announced with the closest approach to strong language that he ever used that he would resign his place at the University, and go out among people and prove that his philosophy was adapted to their needs. These were the days when there was no Pension Funds and no Social Security, I therefore counseled him not to do it, until he had accumulated enough for a retirement fund. After his work on religion appeared, I wrote a review of it for my page in the Christian Evangelist which I entitled the Dual Personality of Dr. Ames. I tried to show that there were two sides to Ames nature. The one thoroughly positivistic, and phenomenalistic, the other profound and mystical and spiritual. I did not of course think Ames to agree with this article, but to my surprise he took more kindly to it than I had dared to imagine. In the meetings of the Commission to Restudy the Disciples, of which I was chairman for several years, it was one of our customary diversions to incite Edward Scribner Ames and Charles Clayton Morrison to a theological duel. Sometimes it lasted a whole day, and it was always highly entertaining, and often to no slight degree edifying. Morrison in those days was a good deal of a High Churchman, and Ames was a thorough-going democrat always with a very small "d". As a result, conservatives and radicals in the group would sometimes applaud one side and sometimes the other. Ames was popular for his interest in the people, and Morrison what many of those considered his more vital faith. No matter how sharp the clashes became, they always ended in perfect good humor and in an undisturbed atmosphere of fraternity.

Frederick D. Kershner

I have known Dr. Ames for a great many years but never known him intimately. I have come in contact with him at conventions and in other gatherings but perhaps my most intimate contact was in the summer of 1936 at the University of Chicago.

Two things have always impressed me about the man. One is a little personality quirk by which he "telegraphs" ahead when one of those wry, dry bits of humor is about to emerge. You no doubt have noted how in speaking he will stop in mid-flight open his mouth and seem about to speak while his countenance lights up, and then let go with some light shaft of dry humor. This I consider humor at its best. His type of joke is not a bombshell that puts everybody under the table but a light witicism announced beforehand by his facial expression but keeps his hearers on the *qui vive*.

The second impression I have of the man is that he becomes the center of every group that he enters. There is something about his



intellectual make-up, his intelligent understanding and his spiritual stature that causes people to organize their attention around him wherever he goes. And they seem to do so without any conscious effort on his part.

If I were to add a third paragraph it would be the one which I imagine many others have also mentioned. Though for years he was vilified and berated by the conservative forces in our brotherhood, he has frequently been called the best Disciple of them all. I mean he has, perhaps more than any other leader among us, caught the real purpose and spirit of the original Campbell movement, as it was before lesser minds and narrower spirits took it over. Thomas Campbell and Alexander in his earlier years before he got so deeply into theological controversy, were catholic Christians in the best sense of the word. Thomas Campbell particularly was an ironic spirit who sought peace and unity. Edward Scribner Ames taught the best there was in the Declaration and Address and became the living exponent of it in the days when we were about to be overwhelmed by fundamentalism.

I realize that I am not giving you much but these are my impressions of a very great man.

James A. Crain

I have no finer friend in my whole circle of friends than Dr. Ames and I remember my contacts with him with the keenest pleasure. His shafts of humor served in many instances to restrain us when we were becoming Don Quixotes. One day while walking down Michigan Avenue with him, he said with his quizzical humor, "Jordan, how long do you think it will take the Disciples to capture Chicago?", I was at that time the Disciples' Superintendent of this city, and that remark considerably deflated me. He has been a most important influence in removing from modern religion the magic and superstition, and giving to it realism and usefulness. I do not have to agree with him on all of his ideas to say that he has been the most important influence in my religious thinking. He belongs not only to his own religious fellowship, but in a larger sense to the Christian world; and whatever honor we pay him will be well deserved.

Your idea of printing some of our impressions of E. S. Ames is excellent. It should be done now while he has a chance to straighten us out, and while he may enjoy the admiration which many of us have for him. I have lived in the same city with him for over fifty years, and for forty years have served with him on the Board of the Disciples Divinity House. I bear witness to the great influence he has had in the shaping of my life.

You are quite right in assigning him a foremost place among the Disciples scholars of our times. I think I have read all of his books, and one summer I studied in a university class where he taught the psychology of religion. It has influenced my work as a minister much.

However, it is to his qualities as a personality that I give cheerful witness. His sense of humor kept him from the extremes that mark the careers of so many radical thinkers. I remember once at a national convention he said to me: "I am going to sell J. B. Briney a subscription to the Christian Century." Briney was then one of the most effective war-horses of orthodoxy. I expressed my scepticism about his ability to make such a sale. What was the amazement of a little knot of us preachers when the sales talk was made, and Briney took out his purse and paid for a subscription. When taken to task by the conservative brethren for this action, Briney said, "I have got to have something to attack, haven't I?"

His open-mindedness was illustrated by taking me one night to attend all the street meetings we could find. He said, "I will listen to anything once." So we heard pleas for anarchy, socialism and wound up with the gospel fulminations of Midnight Mission Bell. I missed my last train home, so we stayed all night in the Y.M.C.A. Hotel. Our patient wives believed our story the next day!

His courage in those days put heart into us all. I will not profess that I always agreed with him, but a lot of us came to believe that we were expendable in the cause of liberty and truth. A man could not enjoy his comradeship, and then "pussy-foot" in the midst of religious discussion.

As a guide to young preachers his advice was most valuable. He built up a great church in a most difficult environment, and at the same time was a teacher of such merit that he became head of the philosophy department of his university. His labors those days were herculean, and from his experiences as a church builder he had much to offer us.

His loyalties could always be counted on. He was no less loyal a Disciple than were some who thought they did God's service in defaming him. His reasons for being a Disciple in a confused religious world were convincing. The loyalty to his religious fellowship was no less marked than his loyalty to his friends. He could sometimes wound to help, like any good surgeon does, but he never ceased his efforts to help men to find their true selves.

This is the way I see him after knowing him more than a half century. May his zeal for sound scholarship and his love of religion be an abiding heritage of the communion he has served so well.

Orvis F. Jordan

Your request sets memories in motion. Mine go back to the decade of 1910 when a great man preached magnificent sermons from the pulpit of a little church which the students called "the pill-box". At 5722 Kimbark the same great man rode his youngest (little Polly) about the house on his broad shoulders while his lovely Mabel looked smilingly on. Not exactly printable memories but precious ones which those who have them are happy to recall and to share with you the while you are assembling the more distinguished ones.

Helena M. Nye

I am too hard driven to do justice to your request. I have known, admired, loved and honored Dr. Ames for forty years or more. I am with him almost every summer up at Pentwater. I regard him highly. I would place him as one of the first three of contemporary leaders who have contributed much and in many ways, to higher thinking and nobler living.

I would speak first of his wonderful smile. It is simply charming. There is something winsome about it, and a little chuckle usually accompanies it. He lives above the fog of partisanship, and is a stranger to intolerance. There is a good deal of the seer about him. He is the best exponent of his own philosophy of any preacher with whom I am acquainted. I enjoy getting him and Charles Clayton Morrison together either at my own place or at Dr. Ames' "castle by the lake." I enjoy pitting one against the other. Charles is dogmatic and fiercely partisan; Ames is reasonable, tentative, and at the same time anything but equivocal.

I wish I had the time and opportunity to write down for you anecdotes and illustrations. Better, I would love to have you drop in on us at Pentwater any time after August 15th, where we will be until October 1st, and will be keeping company with the learned Professor and—to use a much abused term and use it now with the fullest meaning—great humanitarian.

Edgar DeWitt Jones

I have known Edward Scribner Ames as a valued and true friend for nearly fifty years and think of him in the highest terms. He is not a picturesque character—has no eccentricities that make good copy—but is a gentle, quiet, earnest, scholarly man who has a genius for friendship.

His most outstanding trait is loyalty, loyalty to his friends and to the church, especially to the Disciples. In his long pastorate he was such a faithful shepherd that he put under obligation to him nearly all his flock—and always sincere and helpful and quiet.

It pained him to be told that the University Church was built on personal loyalty to him and of course this was only a partial exaggeration, even if partly true. He likes to think of the University Church as composed of people who were devoted to a cause and not to a man.

Anecdotes about him are hard to recall. He attracted people by liking them and by making them like him.

It was as an earnest advocate of "liberal" religion that he was at his best, and he was at his "super best" in his interest in young preachers and students for the ministry and especially the ministry in the church of Disciples. There is a host of them and much of what they are they owe to Ames.

A leader he certainly is and has been. The Campbell Institute is the pride of his life and its continuity and influence would not exist today but for the quiet, wise, intelligent work of Ames.

He will have more than one monument. One is the beautiful church building—dedicated debt-free and the harmonious congregation worshipping in it. Another is the Divinity House (sharing the honor with others.) But one thinks above all of the succession of young preachers whose careers he helped to shape and whose debt to him they eagerly acknowledge.

Eilsworth Faris

I presume that my appraisal of Dr. Ames will duplicate that which you will receive from many who have not been of the inner circle, but who have loved and admired him. As you probably know, I was not a student of Dr. Ames, and our fellowship has been very infrequent and somewhat recent.

The Disciples of Christ needed a philosopher, someone who loved the movement but who could interpret it in the light of basic philosophy. For a century we knew that the movement was more than a theological opinion. The great scholarship and deep insight of Dr. Ames to take us back to John Locke and the renaissance has been something for which the Disciples will always be the richer. He has placed the Disciples of Christ in the perspective of the philosophical stream and at the same time has done nothing to discount our original genius for Christian unity.

As State Secretary of Ohio before Dean Ames' retirement, I had the privilege of considerable correspondence with him in the matter of lo-



cating young men from the Disciples' Divinity House in their first pastorate. This man, who to some may have seemed cold and intellectual, was revealed to me as one having the warmest personal interest in the students who had passed through the Divinity House at Chicago. He was anxious that no man be placed beyond his depth, insisting that each man should start humbly in a modest position and prove his worth.

The capacity of Dean Ames for personal friendship has been amazing. The combination of both teacher and pastor has given him abundant opportunity to express this genial spirit which has made him beloved to so many of us.

I would also like to mention my personal appreciation for his sense of humor. I cannot recall in all my acquaintance any man whose smile could burst forth as sunshine and reveal so much of his own keen sensitivity to that which can best be solved by laughter. I recall on one occasion he referred to himself as the man who could write letters to both God and the Devil. There was the ironic touch, of course, to this because there were those who felt that he was on good terms with each.

It is carrying coals to New Castle to refer to his brilliance. His interests have been wide and his learning goes deep into the reservoirs of human knowledge. Furthermore, such learning has seemed never to have oppressed him. There are the erudite personalities for whom learning seems a burden. For Dean Ames his learning has been a lift and not a load.

I have often asked myself the question, how does one live to be an octogenarian? Perhaps knowing Dean Ames with his completely radiant personality, his devout Christian faith, and his love of his Christian fellows, will prove to be the best answer, at least he is my answer.

Gaines M. Cook

I am glad to respond to your request. I have the highest admiration and affection for Dr. Ames. Many characteristics of Dr. Ames have impressed me. For one thing he has always been a most impressive figure in any company, not only in his physical, but in his intellectual and personality stature.

Though highly sophisticated, his simplicity and almost child-like naiveté in response to the most commonplace objects and events of experience has always been refreshing in the extreme. This no doubt arose from his extraordinary sensitivity to his world and his appreciative response to the significance of its details.

Through the years he has stood as the embodiment of the best elements of liberalism, not only among the Disciples, but in the larger cultur-

al world. He achieved a rare synthesis of the best humanistic insights with deep and compelling convictions to which he has always adhered with unswerving loyalty. I suspect that he, more than any other, has interpreted and has given dynamic influence to the liberal trend among the Disciples. I recall vividly as a student the figure of Dr. Ames at the Louisville Convention pleading for the right to maintain a living link on the mission field as the representative of University Church surrounded by the traditionalists and obscurantists that were challenging his right to do so. I also recall that for years he was shunned by program committees as a convention speaker because of his liberal views, but that of recent years his presentations have been sought after by conventions and conferences throughout the brotherhood.

Of course I recall his preaching through the years I was a member of University Church. It had an intellectual content and at the same time a profound spiritual character. He never worked his sermons out in detail before delivery, so that his mind was creatively at work before the audience. It was always a distinct pleasure to me to watch his mind work as it fashioned ideas in the pulpit into a logical and consistent order of discourse.

In a unique sense, University Church was the embodiment of Dr. Ames' spirit. The freedom, vitality, and profoundly religious quality of life in University Church has been an overt expression of his functional concept of religion. I have never seen its equal elsewhere.

Through his writings Dr. Ames has made an incalculable contribution to a rational understanding of the nature and function of religion in personal and social experience.

His capacity for friendship is one of the most outstanding characteristics. His sensitivity to human relations, his empathy, his understanding and his personal loyalty have endeared him to those who have had the good fortune to be numbered among his personal friends.

Not least attractive in his personality has been his sense of humor—always subtle and unobtrusive, but deliciously flavoring his discourse and shining through his personal relationships.

So, do a good job. You have a noble subject!

William Clayton Bower

I have had no close personal association with Dr. Ames as I did my graduate work at Yale. I have only one recollection of ever meeting and talking personally with Dr. Ames. It was at the end of my first year in Seminary at Yale. I was in Chicago during the summer and attended

University Church one Sunday. I had had correspondence with him and following the service when I spoke to him he remembered me and made some such comment as "All good men eventually get to Chicago." I reminded him that some good men also got their start at Yale, remembering that he was one of the first Disciples to attend the Divinity School at Yale and to organize the Campbell Club there.

I feel that in his writing and speaking he has emphasized a certain segment of our Disciple heritage which is particularly important for us to remember in these days. He has undoubtedly influenced the liberal wing of our brotherhood more than any one person even when much of this influence has been indirect.

Edwin L. Becker

I wish I could give you something of real human interest on Dr. Edward Ames. I am a great admirer of him. He is not only a great preacher, scholar and philosopher, but a man with a warm heart and a lovable personality.

John H. Booth

Dr. Ames, through his public career, has stood for the open mind in the whole realm of knowledge. The interesting thing, however, has been his complete loyalty to the Disciples of Christ. Moreover, those with whom he differed always respected him most highly. Some years ago he was a guest of the Greater Cincinnati Disciples Ministers. We were amazed that a large group was present from the Cincinnati Bible Seminary and the Restoration Movement—and *nearly everyone subscribed to the SCROLL!* In every sense of the word this was a rare love feast.

Some years ago, at one of our Midwestern International Conventions, Dr. Ames was leaning pretty heavily on his cane. In the hotel lobby, Dr. Abe Cory said to him: "Ed, what is your trouble?" Dr. Ames replied, "I have water on my knee." Dr. Cory replied: "Well thank God, it is not on your brain!"

You would be safe in saying that Dr. Ames has had an enormous effect on his generation. One day while in Dr. Albert Coe's class in the Psychology of Religion, at Union Seminary, I quoted from Dr. Ames' book on this subject. Dr. Coe turned aside from his notes and paid to Dr. Ames a glowing tribute as one of the greatest leaders in the field.

Kenneth B. Bowen

What always impresses me is how gracefully he wears his greatness. There is not a trace of pomposity in him. He has all of the prophet's zeal and fire without having lost humanness and good humor. He can

chide himself without weakening the force of what he is saying. For instance while speaking or writing in dead earnest about a great theme or idea he is apt to come out with something like this:

"The more I hear myself talk on this the more convinced I become."  
or

"I was greatly impressed by an idea I heard in a sermon, preached by myself, a few weeks ago."

Dean Ames has empathy as well as sympathy. He not only feels *for* a friend or student in trouble, he feels *with* him. His friendliness is free and cordial, but not effusive.

It is somewhat strange to me that while his speeches and conversation sparkle with good humor and fun that is sometimes hilarious, very little of this is apparent in his writing.

One runs into difficulty if one tries to parrot Ames' philosophy in a pastorate. As a philosophical system, and as a religious faith, Dean Ames' Christianity does not seem to me to be readily adaptable to the parish situations in which I have served. It is not evangelical enough. It assumes our chief enemies to be a militant fundamentalism on one hand and a sceptical rationalism on the other. For these, it is an effective weapon. But my chief worry is a theologically orthodox indifference, and plain old religious illiteracy. This has made some of the hot debates we used to have at the House seem completely academic from where I now stand.

But the influence of Dean Ames as a man and as a thinker is in the bloodstream of every minister who has studied under him.

Hunter Beckelhymer

Two things which I have most appreciated in Dr. Ames. The one was his magnificent intellectual reach; the other, his sense of humor.

Every contact I have had with him, I have remembered, "God has had a way of raising up, in every generation, certain tall men, looking up to whom, the masses are lifted by the look."

Homer W. Carpenter

I knew Ed Ames at Drake, and have been grateful to think of him as a friend during all the years since then. I remember the promise he gave at Drake, the promise of all that he has since become. I think at one time when he was a student, there was some anxiety about his health. He was fortunate in his decision to continue his studies at Yale, and in his choice of Philosophy. He was fortunate in his marriage and in going to Chicago, and no one can estimate the value of his service in connection



with Divinity House. He has done so much, in so many different ways, and all of the highest quality.

But best of all is his boundless capacity for friendship, that constant flow of warm affection in which so many have shared. He is truly a great and good man.

C. M. Chilton

Here is one story which I have always liked:

As our Commission on Restudy of the Disciples of Christ re-assembled for an afternoon session, Dr. Ames with his inimitable twinkle in his eye began in this way: "As I was talking with Dr. Lemmon during the lunch hour, I was greatly impressed by a remark of mine."

Another thing I remember is one which concerns the International Convention at Richmond, Virginia, in 1939. Dr. Ames was staying at the Board of Higher Education Hotel, the John Randolph. After he had checked out, the manager came to Dr. H. L. Smith, then secretary of the board, with a problem. The hotel office had through mistake put on Dr. Ames' bill a rather considerable amount of liquor. After he had paid the bill without looking at it and left the city, they discovered that the charge should have been made to another guest.

Again I recall that a young woman who joined his church a few years before he retired spoke to me with great appreciation for his warm, sparkling personality. Quite honestly and with a wholesome laugh she said, "I certainly would have liked to have known that man twenty-five years ago."

Important as Dr. Ames has been as a teacher and a philosopher, his greatest gift has been that of friendship. Others could wish to exclude him, but he always exercised the veto and included them in his fellowship.

I have always been impressed by the subtle and friendly character of Dr. Ames' humor. He could always laugh at himself and seemed to enjoy no joke quite as much as one in which he is the victim.

I hope that these scattered comments may be of some help. They fall very far short of expressing my own feeling for Dr. Ames.

Geo. Walker Buckner, Jr.

I am delighted to know that some adequate recognition is going to be given to the career of Doctor Ames. I have a number of distinct recollections concerning his helpfulness and some of his attitudes.

On two occasions when I had expected to re-enroll in Chicago in pursuit of my doctorate, financial difficulties obliged me to send in word that I would not be able to be there for the period that I had contemplated. The Disciples Divinity House had a scholarship program designed to help single men who were candidates for the B. D. degree. I did not qualify under either count. On both of the occasions referred to Dr. Ames sent me a check for enough money to cover the main expense for a quarter at Chicago. Each time he simply said that this money was from "funds other than those of the House." I am sure the money was his own personal gift but he never gave an opportunity for discussing the subject. You can see that I owe him a great deal, not only because of the financial help but also because of the unsolicited interest and encouragement. I have no doubt that he helped many other students in much the same way.

The principal recollection concerning Dr. Ames that is held by all those who have known him over a long period of time is his unswerving loyalty to the inherent values in the freedom enjoyed by the Disciples of Christ. He could have had many honors by affiliating with larger and better known religious groups, but his interest in an open search for truth caused him to believe that there was more to be gained by the use of the attitudes and processes of our Brotherhood than in any other place. This does not mean that he was always honored for such a position. With the possible exception of Dr. Herbert L. Willett, Dr. Ames has probably suffered more personal attack and vilification than any other man in our history. As with Dr. Willett, however, he always maintained a quiet calm and an attitude of good will in the midst of unsought controversy.

We remember his constant good humor and appreciation of stories and jokes that had a real point to them. Only once do I recall seeing him semi-perturbed. At a luncheon in the House, we were discussing some charges against the Chicago men, and I more or less brightly remarked that some people probably thought the reason was that we had certain twisted aims. He promptly caught the word allusion and said to the group that all remarks should be pertinent rather than impertinent. I think that he had a measure of very real personal dignity which he did not care to have violated. Perhaps you are aware of the method he devised for congratulating mothers concerning their new babies without doing violence to his own high regard for the truth. He would dutifully wait at the hospital room until the brand new infant was brought in for inspection, and, after an appropriate, careful scrutiny and a slight pause, he would say with great emphasis upon the second word, "That is a baby!"

I started my work at Chicago when our daughter, Pat, was about to celebrate her first birthday. When we took her to the House for intro-

duction to the group, we mentioned her name, but Dr. Ames immediately dubbed her Mary Ann and he has continued to call her that to the present day, now nearly thirty years removed from the original episode.

I hope that you can mix these recollections with some of your better stories in your account. They are very fond memories for me.

A. T. DeGroot

He is a very colorful personality but since I think of it, one very difficult to capture in the meshes of personal incidents. Unfortunately I did not have any work under him while I was at the University of Chicago, but did attend the services of his church quite regularly. I found his preaching stimulating and highly interesting. While his preaching was characteristically philosophical, yet the human interest appeal running throughout brought it down to earth where one lives his daily life.

Inasmuch as my ministry has been a considerable distance from Chicago I have not been thrown with him in any very personal associations. I endeavored at one time to secure him for a series of lectures in my church at Chattanooga, Tennessee, but was unable to work the arrangements out, much to my regret.

\* \* \* \* \*

My observations about our good friend, Dr. Ames?—I always think of him as the “autocrat of the luncheon table.” There at those Wednesday noon luncheons he probed our minds, perhaps trying to see if there were anything in them worth exhibiting to the world—at the same time contributing his own insights into a multitude of problems and areas of thought. His intellectual vigor is a constant source of amazement to me. The way his mind keeps working, in spite of physical infirmities, gives me confidence that some part of us will continue beyond the complete death of the body.

Dr. Ames makes me think of a verse from the Book of Job (I think) —“Is not the integrity of your ways your confidence?” That’s what he is—a man of integrity, singleminded in his devotion to truth, wherever the quest for truth may take him. He is one man, with many facets, extending his life in many directions, but keeping them all related to the center.

Lloyd V. Channels

This is a very large assignment—to tell you what I know about Ames. I have known him since he was 22 years old; and I, 18. We were students at Yale, he a graduate student in Philosophy, I a junior in the College. Then we both came to Chicago and took our Ph. D’s. We both taught at Butler for two years, and during the one year of overlap, while we were there together, I roomed and boarded at his house.

At the time of Ames' retirement, The Disciples Divinity House Bulletin published some articles by various persons giving their impressions of him at various periods. If you do not have a copy of that, you had better write to the House for it. You will find my contribution there.

(We hope to republish *all* of these earlier impressions—Ed.)

W. E. Garrison

Congratulations upon your pursuit of "antic-dotes" about Dr. Ames. For a long time, I had hoped someone would do just what you are doing.

I am not sure that I can be of too great help to you. However, do not forget the "sparkle in his eye." It seems to me you can capitalize on this and go to some length about how his eyes shone and his voice had a certain lilt to it when he was explaining the real core and center of the Disciples of Christ movement—Christian unity.

Do you also remember how if you ever asked him to autograph one of his books that he would put something to this effect: "Yours in the true faith." I know several of the books on my library shelves have such written in them and I covet them greatly.

Then, do you remember the leading questions that would be his in order to get you to express yourself and to think through the problem. I'll not forget the times when we had lunch together, either just the two of us or three or four or more. His was always a scintillating conversation but in it there were these questions which made you think and thus was the great desire to express yourself concretely, intelligently and enthusiastically.

Of course, you will want to reiterate his great love for the University of Chicago, though he was an alumnus of Yale and Drake. He was always fearful of losing "some of our good young men" if they went to school in New Haven. They were surrounded by Congregationalism with a Calvinistic aura and therefore, he always wanted them to go to school at Chicago where they would "feel" the Brotherhood. Another thing which it seems to me you will want to bring to the attention of your readers is the fine hospitality of their home. I remember that I was the first student to attend Chicago from Chapman College. It, in those days, was a long way from Los Angeles to Chicago. Yet, never once did I feel a stranger in what I was warned would be a liberal and cold atmosphere. This was due to Dr. and Mrs. Ames' warm hearts. The times spent in their home will be a cherished memory. They were always sure that you met the better people of the University Church and the campus.

And, having worked with him at University Church, I'll not forget his participation in social affairs. The Friday night parties were always



highlights to which he looked forward. At the dancing period which followed the entertainment hour, he was always in the midst, dancing with the very young high school girls and also with the older maiden ladies. He was a striking figure on the dance floor (I daresay you will want to say that he was always a striking figure at any social affair.)

Myron C. Cole

The relatively few direct contacts which I have enjoyed with Dr. Ames have been very pleasant. I think he is a great gentleman and scholar. His advocacy of a liberal religion and his demonstration of what it could mean in both church and school have been outstanding.

As I recall it, he relates with gusto that he preached his first sermon for the second time at the Christian Church in Ames, Iowa.

Jack Finegan

There are so many aspects of Dr. Ames' nature, so many sparkling facets to his personality, that he can be a favorite subject for bull sessions whenever House men get together. Let me just ramble:

First, let me say, that I don't think any of us appreciated our Brotherhood one-tenth as much when we began our House training as when Dr. Ames got through with us. You will recall his oft-quoted remark that "no matter what our faults as a school, when we get through with a man he is still a Disciple."

I think we all remember how much Dr. Ames loves a joke on himself. Remember the story he used to tell about a conversation between Mrs. Ames and Mrs. C. C. Morrison? Mrs. Morrison: "My husband has two sermons but he uses the same text all the time." Mrs. Ames: "My husband has only one sermon but he changes the text every Sunday."

I also remember how he would laugh at any witticism directed against him. At the luncheons he frequently told stories about his grandchildren. When his first grandchild (I forget the name of Van Meter's baby—was it Scribner?) was of pre-school age, Dr. Ames often told something about him. Dr. Garrison would stir in his chair and inevitably begin a story about one of his grandchildren—"one of my five"—with a wry look at Dr. Ames. Dr. Ames enjoyed such repartee.

I don't know whether we ever appreciated or understood Dr. Ames' philosophy, but his greatest impact upon me and, I think, most of the students, was his winsome personality. A House anecdote of long standing was the comment that "if the Almighty does not look like Dr. Ames, we'll be disappointed." We used to go to some of the ceremonies at Rockefeller Chapel just to see Dr. Ames process in his hood and robe.

His friendliness, though he was very far from ostentatious, was real. Who is there who was not called into his office to talk over personal problems?

The only slight display of his affection towards me came at a time when he knew I might be troubled about illness in my family. I was sitting by the piano in the fellowship room while someone was playing. Dr. Ames stood behind us for a minute and put his hand on my shoulder. A slight thing to remember, I suppose, but in Dr. Ames a real sign of affection and understanding.

His interest in "his boys" and his desire that they be happy in their ministry was so extreme that it could be embarrassing. When he saw any of his boys out in the field, he never failed to take them aside to see how they were getting along. He had his eye on a half dozen splendid pastoral opportunities across the nation and time after time saw to it that one of his boys had the chance to go there if he so desired.

I strongly suspect that Dr. Ames' private loans to poverty-stricken students were beyond number. I don't know this, because no one ever was permitted to tell of anything done for him by Dr. Ames. But I am convinced that students called home by the death of a parent, by illness, or some other emergency had their way paid by Dr. Ames. No doubt most of these loans were returned, but I don't think Dr. Ames intended that they should be.

Well, that is enough for the time being. Best of luck.

Dan B. Genung

# Administrative Meanderings

Some of us who have the responsibilities of carrying on the routine business of The Campbell Institute are becoming deeply concerned about the status of the Institute and its journal, *The Scroll*.

First, let's discuss dues. We operate on a fiscal year (presumably, if we operate on *any kind* of an ordered financial plan!) Dues for 1958-59 become payable anytime after July 1, 1958. Some "members in good standing" have not paid dues to the Institute for years on end! Does this indicate plain, unmitigated negligence; or does it indicate that these delinquents have lost their interest in the Institute and no longer wish to continue as a part of the fellowship? We wish we knew. Paul Kennedy, our Treasurer, would like very much to know where you stand with respect to your interest in membership and in your continuance to receive issues of *The Scroll*. Postal regulations prevent us from sending interminable numbers of the issues to members who do not pay their dues. We are saying with grim reality: If you want to continue as a member of the Campbell Institute, and if you wish to receive *The Scroll*, "get on the ball"! Send your dues (\$2.00 per year) to Paul Kennedy, First Christian Church, Holt and Vine Sts., Ontario, California.

In subsequent issues of *The Scroll* and at the International Convention, some of us want to discuss the real *raison-d'etre* for the Institute. Are there no more religious and intellectual frontiers to assail and conquer? Have we *arrived*?

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# THE SCROLL

The Journal of the Campbell Institute

IN MEMORIAM



EDWARD SCRIBNER AMES

April 21, 1870

June 29, 1958



# A Memorial Service For Edward Scribner Ames

On June 29, 1958, the final curtain was lowered on one of the most significant and beautiful life-dramas in the long history of the Disciples of Christ. For more than sixty years, Edward Scribner Ames served the causes of religion and education for the Disciples of Christ as no other Disciple has done since the time of Alexander Campbell. During this period he literally became the symbol for a liberal approach to religion among the Disciples of Christ. He also became a symbol of a classic fusion of high religion and important education. He never served the principles of a stereotype in either religion or education. When Robert M. Hutchins, Chancellor of the University of Chicago, appointed E. S. Ames to the Chairmanship of the Department of Philosophy, someone pointed out to Hutchins that Ames was also a preacher. Hutchins replied, "Do you mean to tell me that the man I have just appointed as Chairman of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Chicago is also a *preacher*?" When Hutchins was assured that Dr. Ames was, indeed, a full-fledged preacher, he exploded, "Well, he is a h--- of a preacher!" He was not at all irreverent about the explosion. It was his own way of saying that Edward Scribner Ames did not fit the stereotype of a "preacher." E. S. Ames refused to be poured into *anyone's* mold. He was a thorough individualist; and yet he had more concern for the feelings and thoughts of other individuals than anyone could ever demand.

The following pages of THE SCROLL are "A Service of Remembrance," presented in memory and honor of a truly great man. The services were presented at the University Church of Disciples of Christ, which Dr. Ames loved so dearly. Indeed, the University Church is a monument in stone to him. We regret that Dr. Irvin E. Lunger did not have a part in the services. Dr. Lunger was the immediate successor of Dr. Ames in the pulpit of this great church. Dr. Lunger was unable to make plane connections for the precise time of the services. For more than fifteen years, Irvin Lunger carried on the great liberal traditions and emphasis of the University Church.

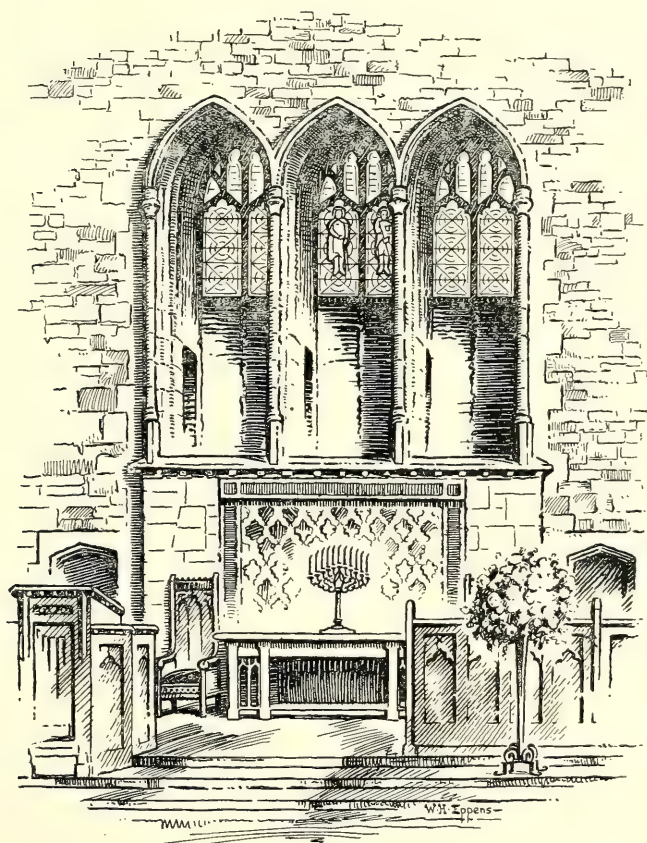


May I have the privilege of saying something even more personal than the usual areas of an editorial? Every statement in the Service of Remembrance is a beautiful testimony to the significance, the loveliness, the impressiveness of a great life which was lived among us for so many years. Each person who contributed to the services took some facet of Dr. Ames' life and made it live for us. Dr. Barnett Blakemore's words seem to have peculiar relevance to some of the inner secrets of Dr. Ames' greatness. His descriptions of the temperament and character of Dr. Ames almost make it appear that there, once more, stands our great friend, talking to us, admonishing us, gently chiding us, but always loving us, even with all our foibles!

It is with great pride and humility that we present these Words of Remembrance to the hundreds of friends of Edward Scribner Ames. Dr. Ames used to talk with us about the real presence of "invisible friends"—even Paul and Jesus. Stanton said of Lincoln when Lincoln lay dead, "Now he belongs to the ages." I do not know of any other Disciple about whom this classic statement more nearly applies. He will always be alive and vigorous and active. Many of us will feel that we could not live long enough to be sufficiently grateful for the influence of this man upon us; nor indeed be grateful enough for his love and devotion.

—W. Marshon DePoister

# A Service Of Remembrance



**UNIVERSITY CHURCH OF DISCIPLES OF CHRIST**

**University Avenue and 57th Street, Chicago**

# Memorial Service For Edward Scribner Ames

Thursday, July 3, 1958

3:00 O'Clock

## HYMNS

The Lord is my Shepherd  
Love Divine  
A Noble Life

Hazel Atherton Quinney  
Koshat  
Zundell  
Zuener

SCRIPTURE READING: I Corinthians 13

J. J. Van Boskirk

CHARLES MORRIS

HAROLD E. FEY

## SOLO

Where 'er You Walk

B. Fred Wise  
Handel

READING OF MESSAGES FROM

FRIENDS

Harold E. Fey

W. BARNETT BLAKEMORE

## SOLO

The Wanderer's Night Song

B. Fred Wise  
Schubert

READING A PRAYER OF DR. AMES'

David M. Bryan

ORGAN

Hazel Atherton Quinney  
Sibelius

Selections from Finlandia

BENEDICTION

Harold E. Fey

## HYMNS

Hazel Atherton Quinney  
Hemy and Walton

Faith of our Fathers

For All the Saints Who From Their

Labors Rest

Barnby

Rise Crowned With Light

Lwoff

## In the Service

Hazel Atherton Quinney Organist, University Church of Disciples of Christ

J. J. Van Boskirk Executive Secretary, Chicago Disciples Union  
Charles Morris Professor of Philosophy, University of Chicago

Harold E. Fey Editor, The Christian Century

W. Barnett Blakemore Dean, Disciples Divinity House

B. Fred Wise Minister of Music, University Church of Disciples of Christ

David M. Bryan Minister, University Church of Disciples of Christ

# Edward Scribner Ames

## As Philosopher

Mr. Ames wrote, that to be vital, "a religion must be virile, realistic, sane, and gay." Well, religious clothes also reveal the man, and I can think of no better characterization of Edward Scribner Ames than as virile, realistic, sane, and gay—provided of course that the religious quality itself not be forgotten: the quality which in Mr. Ames' view of religion is the commitment and devotion to the forces in nature and in man which conserve and enhance human values.

Others, however, will speak of Mr. Ames as a religious man. I shall speak more specifically of him as a philosopher in the University of Chicago. It happened that my first contact with the University, and with philosophy as a possible profession, was through Professor Ames thirty-six years ago. I had finished a Bachelor of Science degree at Northwestern, and had been told that I might do well to do some work with the philosopher George H. Mead of the University of Chicago, because of my growing interest in signs and language. So I decided to explore the situation, even though I was then somewhat suspicious of philosophers and hardly intended to become one myself. It so happened that Professor Ames was student adviser in 1922 at the time of Fall Quarter registration. I told him of my doubts concerning philosophy, of my interest in science, and even suggested that I might want to write a thesis on Nietzsche. And then from him came that incredibly wonderful, wry, comprehensive smile! Here was a religious man who was a philosopher, who welcomed science in relation to philosophy, and who would even permit a young upstart to consider a thesis on the author of *The Antichrist*! That smile certainly in part determined my career. (Incidentally, the thesis on Nietzsche was never written and never further considered.)

Those were the days of what William James called the "Chicago School of Philosophy," and of which Mr. Ames was the last surviving member. He had decided to be a minister in the Disciples of Christ after his graduation from Drake College. He then entered the Yale Divinity School, though, as he later wrote, "without much encouragement from the denominational leaders." Here it is best to let him tell the story of his contact with philosophy in his own words:



“During that year I began to realize that many problems raised in theology are dealt with more fully and freely in philosophy. I borrowed money from my sister and plunged into courses with George T. Ladd. We read Pfleiderer’s *Philosophy of Religion* and I was asked to write a paper on the Hebrews. In that task it dawned upon me, like a great light, that the religion of the Hebrews had evolved, and that its evolution moved with the changing fortunes of the tribes and nation. I also read Schopenhauer’s *World as Will and Idea*. He shook me out of my complacent optimism and showed me the abysmal craving, cruelty and cunning in the human heart. More important, he set forth the deeper nature of the will as impulse, desire, habit, and partly conscious action. Being forced thus to look at all life from a new and contrasted point of view, and to gain some conception of the complex, tangled, and desire-driven human world, I was thrust out upon deep and wide seas of inquiry and reflection.”

“Then I came upon William James. His *Principles of Psychology* had just been published and we went through it in a seminar. His range of scholarship, penetrating analyses, lively and intensely human rewriting of psychology without a soul, opened the field of the new science just then entering upon an epoch of the profoundest significance in all fields, including religion.”

“An appointment to a special fellowship at the new University of Chicago brought me to Chicago for the last year of graduate study. With Professor Tufts I made a special study of English philosophy and discovered the intimate relation between Locke’s *Essay on the Human Understanding* and the religious thought of Alexander Campbell. Here were revealed the sources of my own religious inheritance and new insight into its empirical character. For two years, as instructor in the Disciples Divinity House and as privat-docent in philosophy I had opportunity to carry research in that field and establish a point of view of permanent fruitfulness.”

“After three years as professor of philosophy and pedagogy at Butler College I returned to Chicago in 1900 to accept the pastorate of the Church of Disciples, near the University. I was soon invited to assist again in the department of philosophy, and later became a regular part-time instructor. My interests naturally led to specialization in the psychology and philosophy of religion while also giving courses in psychology, ethics, logic and the history of philosophy.”

It need hardly be added that Mr. Ames became in time a professor in the Department of Philosophy and served for some years as its Chairman.

It is to be noted, as the preceding quotations make clear, that Professor Ames' interest in philosophy centered primarily around the philosophy of religion. This was part of the division of labor characteristic of the early Chicago group. Addison Moore concerned himself primarily with logic and the theory of knowledge, James H. Tufts with ethics and political philosophy, George H. Mead with the philosophy of mind, Edward Scribner Ames with the philosophy of religion. Only John Dewey attempted the whole gamut of philosophy. It is natural to think of him as the leader of the group, and in a sense this is true. But the influences worked both ways. Tufts, Mead and Ames were "on their own" prior to contact with Dewey. Dewey has acknowledged his great indebtedness to Mead. It was Tufts who suggested to Dewey the plan of the *Ethics* of which they were joint authors. And although I do not know whether Dewey had Ames explicitly in mind when he wrote his views on religion in *A Common Faith*, the position he takes is essentially the position which Ames had elaborated many years earlier in his major books, *The Psychology of Religious Experience* and *Religion*.

If we ask, then, what was Ames' philosophy, I think we would have to say that it was what he shared in common with his colleagues Dewey, Mead, Tufts, and Moore, plus his distinctive elaboration of these views when applied to religion. It seems to me that this was essentially Mr. Ames' own conception of the relation between his work as a minister and as a philosopher. To quote from him again:

"I am often asked how I can teach philosophy and be a preacher. Everyone seems to sense the difficulty. To some extent the acuteness of the problem is a reflection upon both schools and churches, for it suggests that they are both somewhat withdrawn from real life where thinking and action are closely interactive. In my experience the church has been a kind of laboratory for observation and cultivation of the living processes of religion, and the university has been a place for systematic study of them and of similar phenomena from many sources, in the light of psychology and philosophy. I have grown to have increasing appreciation of this rare combination and to feel the value of each interest for the other."

My own work was not in the philosophy of **religion** and fell under Moore's and Mead's direction rather than Ames! But his qualities as a teacher remain vivid with me, and were indeed **the qualities** of his colleagues. The problem was the central thing, and **what** others had thought about it was only a starting point. Student and teacher were drawn into a common inquiry, and both had **their say**. There was no lesson to be simply learned, but a work to be done, and done in common. Philosophy was taken seriously, as of human **importance**. It was not a matter of play or of recitation. The teacher drew the student out and the student the teacher. Ames' smile was always at work, and never a whip. One had the sense of being in the presence of a **humanly large** man.

The mutual relevance of science and religion which **Edward Scribner Ames** so much emphasized has become an important **present-day** concern. Conferences on the **East Coast** and the **West Coast** now make it a recurrent theme. Nothing that I have heard or read **in these** discussions seems to me to have negated or gone much beyond **Ames' own** position.

Finally, to let Mr. Ames himself speak again: " '**The world is young,**' I heard a chapel speaker say years ago, and the word precipitated into clearness many impressions until that moment **vague**, and induced a mood of acceptance and expectancy which has **remained.**' "

And, indeed, the mood of acceptance and expectancy **did** remain with **Edward Scribner Ames**. When I saw him a few **months** ago, the smile was still the same. One felt he was himself entire **in that** smile.

—Charles Morris

(All quotations are from Mr. Ames' article "Theory in Practice," in *Contemporary American Theology*, vol. 2, edited by Vergilius Ferm. Round Table Press, Inc., 1933.)

# Edward Scribner Ames

## Minister And Churchman

Edward Scribner Ames lived a full and gracious life. He was a friend of multitudes, including particularly former students and members of the University Church of Disciples, yet no person was ever lost in the crowd to him. He was a scholar who influenced the thought of a generation, yet he loved persons above abstract ideas and saw in each person individuality and the capacity for transcendence. Some Indiana farm people who met him once at church, after he had ceased to preach, remember him and talk about his kindness to this day. He was a man, but his greathearted and outgoing spirit have given many of us a deeper understanding of the love of God, of the meaning of fatherhood.

Dr. Ames was a Christian whose life incorporated faith, hope and love; a churchman who loved the church and did much to strengthen the fellowship of Christian people; a minister who was a shepherd and an example.

Dr. Ames was a Christian. He was the product of Christian community, and was himself a center of Christian influence and fellowship. He used the liberty that is in Christ in different ways than most other Christians of his day used it, but he nevertheless took his stand within the Christian community and spoke to it. Moreover, he showed forth in his own life the faith, hope and love which are the marks of a Christian. Multitudes who could not understand his books, as well as the many who could and did understand, found strength in his kindness, in his gentle, unfailing humor, in his outgoing personal concern for all sorts and conditions of men, including themselves. He had enemies, even within the church, but he loved them too and in time came to be loved by many of them.

Dr. Ames was a churchman. He believed in churches and gave a good part of his life to the organization, growth, instruction and nurture of the University Church of Disciples of Christ, which stands as a living memorial to his dedication. He was not insensitive to the claims of wider Christian fellowship, but believed they were invested, and on this concept built his view of Christian unity. He believed the church has a mission to the university, that faith and learning are not necessarily antagonists but can complement each other in the service of truth which is also the service of the God of all truth.

Dr. Ames was a minister. He assumed the responsibility of nurture for the spiritual needs of men, women and children. He applied to his



own life the principles he urged on others, and his devotion to his beloved wife and family was extended in scarcely diminished degree to the larger family of this local church. He believed that the worship of God in the congregation of men and women of faith was so important that he devoted years to planning and building this church. His conception of the ministry is symbolized by the simplicity and dignity of a sanctuary in which fellowship is stressed above liturgy, in which the table of the Lord's Supper is central.

W. E. Garrison, his friend for 65 years since both were students at Yale and his associate and colleague in the church and the University of Chicago, at my request wrote for this service his comment on Dr. Ames' "special gift for encouraging and guiding young men preparing for the ministry. He stimulated their thinking and quickened at once their critical and their appreciative powers. He disturbed the complacency of those who needed this service while deepening their understanding of the nature of religion and revealing to them the rich and rewarding possibilities of religious leadership. He was not interested in turning out little Amesites. Though his students loved and revered him, few if any of them emerged with a replica of his theology. He gave them what was much better—the desire and capacity to find their own. To these and to an uncountable company of others who heard him preach and pray, he was a mighty force for good, a stimulus to intelligence in the spiritual life, an exponent and exemplar of religion pure and undefiled. His voice is stilled but his works do follow him."

And now in this memorial service we are compelled to confront the fact of mortality and to ask ourselves Job's undying question: "If a man die, shall he live again?" I would not be true to my own deepest convictions if I did not in this situation express my own belief that the answer is Yes. Every life has dimensions that reach beyond time into eternity, and certainly that is true of the life whose earthly pilgrimage is now ended. This is something more than immortality of influence. This is the resurrection, the continued existence in some living form of the person: the triumph in which "death is swallowed up in victory" through Jesus Christ. So it seems fitting to close with words from another stalwart teacher and shepherd of souls: "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God." (Romans 8:38-39.)

—Harold E. Fey

# Edward Scribner Ames

There is a bewildering richness of material when I think of the varied and valuable services Dr. Ames rendered to many generations of students, to a church, to a university community and a city, and of the long period of my own intimate association with him.

Our friendship began sixty-six years ago this coming September when we were both students at Yale. He preceded me one year in transferring to Chicago to continue his graduate work, and it was he who persuaded me to continue mine. I lived in his house and ate at his table for a year while we were both, briefly, teaching in Butler University. It was chiefly he, as Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the Disciples Divinity House, who brought me back from the Southwest to be its Dean. Later, for a period of many years, he was "the administration" and I was "the faculty"—to use his own whimsical and perfectly accurate phrase. For twenty years he was my pastor. Always he was my friend.

I could speak at length and with enthusiasm of the creative energy that Dr. Ames infused into his pastorate, the unique quality of the church that developed under his ministry, and of his no less unique direct approach to the problem of Christian unity. But I leave that for others.

As a thinker and teacher in philosophy his influence was far-reaching. In the Disciples Divinity House he exercised a special gift for encouraging and guiding young men preparing for the ministry. He stimulated their thinking and quickened at once their critical and their appreciative powers. He disturbed the complacency of those who needed this service, while deepening their understanding of the nature of religion and revealing to them the rich and rewarding possibilities of religious leadership. He was not interested in turning out little Amesites. Though his students loved and revered him, few if any of them emerged with a replica of his theology. He gave them what was much better—the desire and capacity to find their own. To these and to an uncountable company of others who heard him preach and pray, he was a mighty force for good, a stimulus to intelligence in the spiritual life, an exponent and exemplar of religion pure and undefiled.

His voice is stilled, but his works follow him.

—W. E. Garrison

# Statement By Rabbi Louis L. Mann

*Sinai Temple—Chicago*

Chicago Sinai Congregation joins me in expressing our deep appreciation for what Edward Scribner Ames was to us.

In his passing our Community, our University, liberal religion everywhere has lost a champion and a friend. We are all the poorer for his passing even as we are richer for his having been. As I am detained at the hospital for a few days, I must pen these lines instead of speaking them.

Edward Scribner Ames, through his writings and teaching enriched and deepened my thinking and my concept of religion. His interpretation of religion included all and excluded none. He was often saddened but never discouraged because the arbitrary artificial man-made distinctions between man and man so often obliterated the God-made resemblances. We pray that a portion of his spirit may descend upon all of his colleagues.

I personally felt so close to him and felt so greatly indebted to him, that when I heard of his passing, there flashed before my mind first the words of the Psalmist: "God has given his beloved sleep," and then the words that King David uttered at the passing of one of his generals: "*Know ye that a prince and a great man has fallen this day in Israel.*" He taught and lived the Judeo-Christian tradition with all of its prophetic insight and moral stamina. With Shakespeare I may say: "I shall not look upon his like again."

He never caused a tear to flow save when he died.

His memory will be a blessing because his life was a benediction.

The Rabbis of the Talmud say that there are two kinds of immortality; first, the immortality of our hopes and secondly, a rational, visible, demonstrable immortality—the immortality of influence. Each one of us influences to some degree, infinitesimally small or overpoweringly great as the case may be, everyone with whom we come into contact. This moral "chain reaction" never ceases.

The Talmud then points out that the teacher above everyone else is the exemplar of this never-ending influence. They then quoted the book of Daniel to substantiate it: "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament and they that lead many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever." They amplified it by saying, "the righteous are alive even after death—alive in influence for the good."

# Edward Scribner Ames

In 1894, at the first meeting of the newly constituted Board of Trustees of Disciples Divinity House, a 24 year old graduate student was named Head Resident. There being no residence to head, he was set at the task of raising funds. The relationship which began with that appointment between Disciples Divinity House and Edward Scribner Ames lasted sixty-four years and ended only with his death at the age of eighty-eight last Sunday. In those sixty-four years not only had the residence been built; other properties had been acquired, the financial resources of the House were brought to well past one million dollars, its graduates and former students came to be numbered in the hundreds, and its friends made legion. By far the larger part of the realization of the idea of a Disciples Divinity House at the University of Chicago was the work of Dr. Ames.

In writing to Dr. Ames' family this week, Mr. Arnold B. Keller, President of the Board of Trustees of Disciples Divinity House said:

“Dr. Ames left a precious heritage both in ideas and institutions. His work in developing Disciples Divinity House has enabled hundreds to follow after him and to further the finest kind of religious expression. We shall share in that heritage because by building great institutions he has given us significant and meaningful work to do. Indeed, he has left us inspired teachings to transmit to future generations. Your father's influence has only just begun. It will endure for more years than any of us can realize, for Disciples Divinity House will be furthering the causes for which he stood.”

In one respect the scope of Dr. Ames' accomplishments can be grasped through the statistics of his relationships to institutions. For thirty-five years he was a member of the department of philosophy of the University of Chicago, serving some years as head of the department and retiring as Professor-Emeritus. He was a charter member of University Church of Disciples of Christ. He became its minister in 1900 and retired forty years later as Minister-Emeritus. In 1901 he became a member of the Board of Trustees of Disciples Divinity House, serving



for many years as its secretary. In 1927 he became Dean of the House, retiring in 1945 as Dean-Emeritus. He was a charter member also of the Campbell Institute, an association of liberal ministers and laymen amongst the Disciples of Christ. In the latter half of his life he served as editor of the monthly bulletin of the Campbell Institute, a journal named *THE SCROLL*. His devotion to that editorship was one of several ways in which his influence was spread. Besides these associations there were professional and social relationships lasting through long periods of years.

The summary of statistics and facts regarding Edward Scribner Ames had become impressive while he was still a young man, and continued to accumulate throughout his life. But it is not in length of years that greatness lies. What makes the years memorable is that they held a career in which a man gifted with strength of body, mind and spirit graciously poured out the talents that had been given him in service to God, to his fellows and friends, and to his family.

Dr. Ames' personal qualities are clearly discernible in his career as Dean of the Disciples Divinity House. He came into that position just as the Disciples house was being built. It was a critical time for the organization. Construction costs were exhausting the funds of the corporation. Furthermore, a way of life and inner character had to be given to the institution, in order that men who came to study there would be truly nurtured. The deanship of Edward Scribner Ames was characterized by marked success in meeting both of these problems. His portrait rightfully hangs in the central position of the Founders' corner in the Common Room of the Disciples Divinity House across the court from this church. Both problems were met because E. S. Ames was not first a builder of institutions, but rather he was first a builder of men, and all the institutions he served, he served because they enhance the human soul.

With few exceptions no one ever met E. S. Ames without some enlargement of person—either he was enlightened by instruction, or his spirit was enhanced, or his life was given new force and direction. A man who is today a college president wrote these words ten years ago: "My first meeting with Dr. Ames was most opportune. I had reached

bottom in a long period of spiritual and mental bewilderment. It seemed as if unscalable walls were hemming me in. It was Dr. Ames who showed me the doorways leading through them, and made possible for me a positive, dynamic, creative faith where only doubt, bewilderment and frustration existed before." These words reflect the experience of a man who needed a mentor willing to spend many hours with him in finding the answers to intellectual problems, and in E. S. Ames he had found such a man.

Dr. Ames had an aptitude for moral persuasion in exactly the right way at exactly the right moment. A student whose doctoral dissertation had been rejected a few days before was beginning to entertain feelings of self-pity. Dr. Ames sensed it and redeemed the situation with a single sentence: "You must remember that this business of getting a Ph.D. has something of the character of a game to it; get back in there and fight." Three months later the student had his doctor's degree.

In dealing with troubled souls, Dr. Ames would summon tremendous sensitivity. He had vast resources of tenderness with which to comfort the bruised and distressed. A well-known missionary once wrote these lines: "A friend of mine who had to return from the missionary field because of poor health found that many persons misinterpreted his motives. They were cold and critical and thought he had turned his back on his life work because of modern ideas. Coming almost new and strange to the University Church, he found in Dr. Ames a friend and a source of encouragement for rebuilding his life around a new program." E. S. Ames could intuitively sense a daunted spirit and usually knew how to restore it.

.But the full scope of his powers is best seen in his ability to deal with the kind of young men and women whose spirits were by no means daunted but who were about done with the Christian faith. For E. S. Ames the worst tragedy was a man of power lost to the Christian cause. This was for him the supreme work of the devil. Both within the church to which he ministered and in the school he led were to be found a remarkable proportion of the kinds of people who usually are not to be found in churches, but who were in Dr. Ames' church and school praising and confessing God with an utter and constantly new-

found sincerity—themselves surprised and joyful that religious faith with which they had been almost done had been restored to them, and with power and glory as they had never known it before. Some of these were persons of aesthetic sensitivity whose earlier experiences with religion had led them to suppose that religion was always philistine and barbarous, and that beauty and faith could have no participation in each other. A member of his church tells that she was drifting away from religion, largely because the communion service as she had always experienced it was not only routine, but crude and tasteless. Then one morning she came to Dr. Ames' church, and in the communion service by virtue of the way he administered it, she was present at a feast of beauty. The simple elements of bread and wine were made majestic, and here eyes and ears heretofore enraptured by other arts discovered for the first time that truly the worship of God is the finest of all the fine arts, and that until worship has become fine art, it is not a worship fit to offer to our God. His own spirit could discern where others missed it—the religious faith in so-called secular prose and poetry. The whole world of literature was available to this Christian minister as he sought to prepare his people for every experience that could come to them. And who could forget if they had ever heard him read them as he did a number of times in sermons from his pulpit these words of Walt Whitman's:

“Come lovely and soothing death, undulate round the world,  
Serenely arriving, arriving. In the day, in the night,  
To all, to each, sooner or later delicate death.

Praised be the fathomless universe, for life and joy,  
and for objects and knowledge curious,  
and for love, sweet love—but praise, praise, praise,  
for the sure enwinding arms of cool-enfolding death.

Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet,

Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome? Then I  
chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all,

I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come, come un-  
falteringly.

Approach strong deliveress,  
When it is so, when thou hast taken them I joyously sing the dead,  
Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee,  
Laved in the flood of thy bliss,  
.....  
And the soul turning to thee, O vast and well veiled death,  
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.

Over the tree tops I float thee a song,  
Over the rising and sinking waves, over the myriad fields and the  
prairies wide,  
Over the dense-packed cities all and the teeming wharves and the  
ways,  
I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee O death."

Part of Dr. Ames' aesthetic quality was a wonderful sense of humor. Dr. Ames used to delight in telling about the first time he broke through the restraints of a rigid puritanism and attended the theatre on a Sunday. It was an Easter performance of *Parsifal*, and he found in that fact some calming of his conscience. For conscience Dr. Ames did have. And some there were who were saved for religion because at last they had found an example of integrity. For persons who had come to believe that religion was nothing but cant, that religious organization was irredeemably caught into corruption, what they found and experienced in Dr. Ames restored their ability to yearn for the good life in the moral sense for themselves and others.

E. S. Ames never gloried in the righteousness he had. He sought no personal justification by a claim to goodness. In this he was thoroughly Christian—he was saved by his faith not by his works. But the good works and the goodness were there, visible in such fruits of the spirit as kindness and joy and forbearance and family affection and craftsmanship, lack of procrastination, self-discipline at work. These things were unmistakably present because they can not be hidden. But there were other dimensions of morality there also—and woe betide the man who provoked them. Dr. Ames could reprove and rebuke and chastise, but he never did it in public. If it was necessary to fight, he had stomach for a fight, but he never did that in public either. He could do what



had to be done, but in so far as it could be saved, human dignity was saved. We are not speaking in this regard of human perfection. E. S. Ames would be the first to assert that there is no such thing, but we are recalling a moral stature far above the average, devoted to the cause of Christ, which for many a young man held back his cynicism about religion and gave him some hope of attainable worth to which his own life might be devoted.

Most of all Dr. Ames wanted to win inquiring minds for the Christian cause. Time after time when men had given up religious inquiry and decided to go into some other discipline, he would win them back to the intellectual love of God and the pursuit of the highest truths. I think it is fair to say Dr. Ames believed that as between the brilliant atheist or inquiring agnostic on the one hand, and the right authoritarian and the stupid sentimentalist on the other hand, the cause of Christ was safest in the hands of the atheist and the inquiring agnostic. They, at least, might find the truth where it was unlikely the authoritarian would do so.

Against all authoritarians, E. S. Ames brought the argument that they most dread, the argument that truth and validity can never be established by reference to anything in the past, but that the test always lies in the future. Never anything that has been, but only consequences that will follow establish truth or value. These are the hard teachings which the world does not like to hear: "Test the spirits. By their fruits ye shall know them. Each man's work will become manifest, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done."

This pragmatism is the despair of all traditionalism and of the traditional bulwark of conservatism and orthodoxy, but it frees the future from all that which is dead and places the criteria out ahead of us. E. S. Ames' pragmatism was full of hope, and though he might disclaim the term, it was fully eschatological.

His pragmatism was also an expression of the intellectual integrity of his religion. If there was any one class of persons whom E. S. Ames drove to frustration, it was those professional religionists whose stock in trade is emotionally freighted and virtually obscure words and

symbols with which they manipulate other peoples' behavior and feelings. Such words and symbols had no power whatsoever over E. S. Ames, and he taught others how to be free from them. These precious signs he helped man rebuild in order that they might become once again man's instruments for fashioning good instead of being his bondage to life-confining institutions. The conventional religionist found to his dismay that there was no way he could handle this man who wore no marks of submission—no religious symbols anywhere about his person. He believed that there was no such thing as religious vestment except the noble life, the simple faith, the open heart and hand, the lovely litanies that all men understand. The source of his freedom was the knowledge that no term, no phrase, no thesis is truly understood until its practical implications have become crystal clear. No amount of logical coherence with other terms, phrases or theses, no correspondence with things as they are—neither of these renders up meaning. Meaning is clear only in consequences. Philosophical and theological authoritarianism alike, and the sentimentality they breed, were banished by this man for whom the practical is the realm in which truth is tested.

But there is something inadequate about having discussed E. S. Ames in these analytical terms. Aesthetic and moral power, intelligence and freedom—truth, goodness and beauty. Yes, these are the dimensions. But to know Dr. Ames personally was always to meet the full man—to see and experience all of these things working together at once.

A scholar wrestling with truth, yes, and we might well have met in a University Hall to memorialize him. A seminary dean struggling to help aspiring ministerial students build morale and morality. Yes. And we might well have met in Disciples House Chapel to remember him. A man who understood beauty in human relationships, the fine art of human association with friends and family. Yes. And we might well have met in his home to memorialize him.

But most of all, all of these things together. And for E. S. Ames there was but one place where they all met in perfection and full accord—in the heart of God, who is truth and goodness and beauty. God who is real as Jesus of Nazareth was real; God who is ideal as a holy spirit redeem-

ing the world by discerning the good within it; God who is personal, God and Father of us all who makes us, and in whom we live and move and have our being. And where best could we gather to remember Edward Scribner Ames, but here in this church which he built and in which he labored to show forth to us the God, real, ideal, and personal, who is our strength and our salvation.

—W. Barnett Blakemore

## A Funeral Prayer

*(From E. S. Ames' Own Notes)*

Oh God, great spirit of love and comfort, we turn to thee in our times of deepest need. We need strength beyond ourselves when the storms overwhelm us; we need love when those who have loved us with understanding and unmeasured affection are taken from us.

We walk all our lives in the midst of mystery and wonder, and when our day is spent and the evening comes and the sun has set on the far horizon, may the afterglow illumine the sky.

We celebrate here a long and fruitful life. For this life we give thanks. For its well-springs of intelligent love, for its courage and charm and fidelity, we give thanks.

We rejoice in the remembrance of this life fulfilled in dignity, honor and rich friendliness. The impulses of generosity have been quick and strong; they have radiated streams of help and healing which flow on in unnumbered lives beyond all days and distances.

As flowers bring their beauty and fragrance into this shadow and silence, so may the loveliness of remembered blessings brighten this day.

Amen.

# A Few Of The Scores Of Telegrams And Messages Of Sympathy And Understanding Which Were Sent To The Ames Family At The Death Of Edward Scribner Ames

My deepest sympathy to you Damaris, Adelaide, and Polly in the loss of your father. He was one of my choicest friends to whose memory I am deeply indebted for inspiration and intellectual stimulation. May you be comforted by the sure knowledge of a life so well lived to the benefit of a great host of colleagues and students.

—Roy G. Ross, General Secretary  
National Council of Churches

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Personally and on behalf of the staff of the Christian Board of Publication we extend to you our sympathy at the passing of your father. Dr. Ames's distinguished service to the church across the years was an inspiration to all of us. His friendship will be treasured by us all.

—W. H. Cramblet, President

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Our best love and sympathy to all the family.

—Sam and Evah Kincheloe

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The United Society joins with me in extending deepest sympathy to you in the death of Dr. Ames. He was one of the truly great leaders of the Disciples of Christ and has left an indelible mark upon our brotherhood and world Christendom. His influence will continue to inspire and direct us through the books he has written and the institutions he has helped to establish and maintain. May the God of all comfort strengthen and keep you in this hour of sorrow.

—A. Dale Fiers

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Please accept my sincere condolences and deep sympathy on the death of your father.

—Richard J. Daley, Mayor of Chicago





# THE SCROLL

The Journal of the Campbell Institute

**WHENCE, WHITHER AND HOW?**

Winfred E. Garrison

**CAN A FREE SOCIETY SURVIVE?**

Robert M. Hutchins

**THE MOST WASTED HOUR**

Virgil E. Foster

**THE CHIMERA OF CHRISTIAN UNITY**

W. Marshon DePoister

**DISCIPLE DILEMMAS OR  
OPPORTUNITIES FOR DOING SOLID THINKING**

W. B. Blakemore

**A LETTER TO DEAN BLAKEMORE**

Glenn R. Johnson

Montana School of Religion  
Montana State University

**REFLECTIONS ON BLAKEMORE'S "ECUMENICAL NEXT STEPS"**

# Whence, Whither And How?

By Winfred E. Garrison

Some years ago I wrote a little book under the title, *Whence and Whither the Disciples of Christ*. The two questions are closely related. Both are pertinent to present thinking about the Campbell Institute. I have been asked to write a few words on this duplex topic, and I have added a codicil on "How." First then,

## WHENCE?

During the national Convention at Springfield, Illinois in 1896, the Campbell Institute was organized by fourteen men, one of whom was a woman. If any are now alive who remember Albertina Allen Forrest, they will understand why I put it that way and that it implies nothing derogatory to that remarkable and brilliant lady. We all were, or very recently had been, graduate students in theology or some closely related field, mostly at Yale or Chicago and some of us at both. Our number, fourteen, was virtually identical with the number of Disciples who had done graduate work of this nature in any university or theological seminary. It must be remembered that up to that time it had been universally assumed that any young minister who had a bachelor's degree from one of our colleges or had finished the course at the College of the Bible (then not a graduate school) was fully equipped for his life-work. I myself had been described in print as a young man who had gone "to have his education topped-off in the uncongenial atmosphere of a sectarian university."

These fourteen, of whom I am now the sole survivor, felt both the loneliness and the exhilaration of pioneers. To tell the truth, we perhaps took some sinful pride in our loneliness and in the dangerous distinction of venturing into untrodden paths. We formed the Institute to organize our loneliness into a fellowship, to encourage one another in the pursuit of scholarly ends when we entered upon our tasks, and to reinforce our devotion to what we conceived to be the main objective of the Disciples of Christ.

Article II of the Constitution adopted in 1896 stated the object of the Institute in these words:

The purpose of this organization shall be: (1) to encourage and keep alive a scholarly spirit and to enable its members to

help each other to a riper scholarship by the free discussion of vital problems. (2) To promote quiet self-culture and the development of a higher spirituality among the members and among the churches with which they shall come in contact. (3) To encourage positive productive work with a view to making contributions of permanent value to the literature and thought of the Disciples of Christ.

I have so many times heard Dr. Ames say that I wrote this article of the Constitution that I have come to believe that I really did. Anyway it is a good statement of what we had in mind.

We took our scholarly intentions seriously. The Constitution provided for the division of the members into five "chambers," each devoted to a particular department of study, and each with a "head" to prod the others to "riper scholarship" and "productive work." I was the first head of the chamber of "church history, missions and comparative religion." So far as I know, I never had a successor, for this phase of the organization soon faded out. However, the mutual encouragement to productive scholarship did not fade out. The membership grew, but slowly for a time, for graduate study was a requirement and candidates had to be elected. There was never any theological test but most of us were, in fact, "liberals" as judged by the then current ultraconservative standards of the Disciples. The *Christian Standard* fought us for years as a coterie of young and reckless radicals who, in spite of their irresponsibility and unimportance, rated an immense amount of space in the paper and somehow managed to boost one another into important positions of leadership. On the other hand, the editor of the *Christian-Evangelist*—my father, J. H. Garrison—gladly accepted election as an honorary member. The terms of membership were soon widened. By 1921 any college graduate could register as a member without the formality of election. Meetings were open to all. The claim that it was a secret society with sinister designs no longer had any plausibility. Still, the estimate of it by many as a band of dangerous liberals persisted as long as the *Christian Standard* was a factor in the life of the brotherhood. The membership was still farther widened to include practically anybody who wanted to join.

Meanwhile the little trickle of ministerial students to universities and seminaries was growing to a flood, and we were developing some solid and scholarly graduate seminaries of our own. The scholarly minister or professor with more than a bachelor's degree was no longer



lonely. Sound graduate training certified by a B.D. or Ph.D. from an approved institution became the normal equipment for ministers of the better churches and professors in our colleges. Furthermore, several universities and seminaries have begun to hold summer institutes for ministers which offer attractions with which the annual meetings of the Institute in Chicago could not compete on equal terms. What function then, if any, is left for the Campbell Institute under these changed conditions? It is a fair question.

### WHITHER?

After all the obviously superseded functions have been written off, there may remain some things that the Institute can do besides merely continuing its more than six decades of existence. I have the feeling—and it is not wholly a sentimental attachment to an organization with which I have been connected for three-fourths of my life—that there is still something for it to do. I suggest a few reasons why it may still be useful:

1. It is good for younger and older men with kindred interests to have a place of meeting on equal terms for the mutual stimulation of their minds, the exchange of their ideas, and the cultivation of their sense of comradeship in their intellectual and spiritual endeavors. I know this from experience at both ends of the scale. In the early years of the Institute we were all relatively young men, but I was the youngest by a considerable margin. What it meant to me to have such fellowship with my seniors—men like Willett and Ames and Clinton Lockhart and Levi Marshall—is past all reckoning or telling. The classroom relation between professors and students, and the summer conference situation between distinguished conference lecturers and eager participants, are excellent, but they are something very different. I know also how good it is for the older men, now that I have become one of them, to have this kind of fellowship and intellectual interchange across the zones of age. The Institute can still provide an unequalled field for such a meeting of minds and hearts on a scholarly level without distinction of status.

2. Most intelligent Disciples—including all Institute members, so far as I know—are heartily in sympathy with the Ecumenical Movement. We recognize that its objective, a United Church, has been our objective ever since the dissolution of the Springfield Presbytery and the publication of the Declaration and Address. So the Disciples of Christ have rightly thrown their full weight into the Ecumenical Movement and

have come to be recognized as among its most enthusiastic supporters. This is splendid. But there has developed a certain type of ecumenical theology and ecclesiology which is very different from that which has historically been central and structural in the thought and program of the Disciples. This is not to say that it may not be right. Perhaps we need to change our concept of what kind of church a United Church would be and how it is to be attained. But at least we ought not to do this by inadvertence, or out of sheer fraternal good nature, or because we have let our own thinking be overwhelmed by the prestige of the ancient churches and the reputation of great names in European theology. Believe me, this is no imaginary danger. We need some forum or agency for the critical consideration—sympathetic and friendly, of course, but rigorously critical examination—of developments within the whole ecumenical movement. At present there is no group or organization better equipped than the Campbell Institute to carry on such studies competently and with that complete freedom that has always characterized its proceedings.

3. The Institute, of course, never passes resolutions, attacks or defends specific policies, or tries to throw its weight around in determining the programs of the Disciples of Christ or their agencies. There is need, however, of a free field for the frank discussion of these things. The Institute has had a unique value in providing such an arena. The need continues and the Institute is as capable of helping to meet it as it ever was. Its "midnight sessions" at the conventions, for example, have furnished some of the most interesting sessions over the past thirty years. They have an established reputation of being occasions where anything that needed an airing could get it, where anyone who had anything to say could say it, and where any opinion on any side of any pertinent question could be freely expressed—and would probably be just as freely answered. This freedom of discussion has also characterized the summer meetings of the Institute, though with not so large an audience, and it can be a feature of *The Scroll*.

### HOW?

If these are useful functions which the Campbell Institute can perform, what are the methods by which it can perform them? I offer only a few suggestions without discussing them and will leave it to others to amplify and elaborate.

1. Continue the organization with its membership, as now, open to any who are interested in joining.

2. Continue *The Scroll* and enlarge it so far as contributions and cash permit. Members are dilatory about sending articles or even paragraphs. (I know, because I edited it for four years and had to write most of it myself.)

3. There should be a summer meeting. This might be at Chicago as heretofore (my natural preference), or from year to year it might go to one and another of our academic centers. I say this without consultation or authority, but Butler Drake, Phillips, the College of the Bible (Lexington), or T.C.U. might be willing to be host to the meeting, perhaps in connection with an institute or short course.

4. Regional meetings have often been suggested but I think have never been tried with much success. They might be tried again, at least in a few cities in which there are several members who could attend without much travel.

5. Night meetings after evening sessions of the International Convention should be continued and taken seriously as a major activity.

6. Members need to experience a revival of zeal for *productive* scholarship. This was one of the initial aims of the Institute. Most members of the Institute study and think in scholarly fashion. A few write books. Some write sermons and lectures. Many apparently do not write at all. It will be good for them if they will cultivate or revive the habit of putting their best ideas into writing and sending them somewhere for publication or offering them at the next meeting of the Institute. If the ideas are good enough and the writing brief enough, send them to *The Scroll*.

# Can A Free Society Survive?

*Robert M. Hutchins, New York City*

The American people have reason to be grateful to you and the organizations you represent for having led them through another battle to secure the blessings of liberty for them and their posterity. Even highly placed politicians and powerful engines of the press, persuaded partly by you and partly by the Supreme Court, now talk quite a different language from that which they were using two or three years ago. As Mr. Auden has it, thanks to you,

"Brisker smells abet us,  
Cleaner clouds accost our vision  
and honest sounds our ears."

In the perspective of the last thirty-five years, the American people have even more cause to be thankful to you. Largely as a result of your efforts the vast aggregations of underdogs who were the object of the solicitude of nineteenth-century liberalism have been elevated to a position where they are no worse off than the rest of the population.

But it must be admitted that you are a minority, or, I should prefer to say, an elite. If you want any evidence beyond the scars you bear, I would remind you that the total annual budget of the American Civil Liberties Union is only a little bit more than the amount that would be regarded as a modest annual stipend for a moderately successful executive in the major industries of the United States.

I think it fair to say that the American is seldom much interested in freedom and justice for other people, including other Americans. The Bill of Rights often appears to concern only those who find that they they can make some personal use of it.

Editors, publishers, and broadcasters are interested in the First Amendment because under this banner they may be able to extort more news from the Defense Department and send reporters to China. I sympathize with these ambitions, but I cannot fail to note that with some honorable exceptions editors, publishers, and broadcasters have not been much interested in other amendments, or even in those parts of the First Amendment which do not mention them. They have customarily condemned those who plead the Fifth Amendment and



have deprecated the suggestion that a fair trial might require the elimination of cameras from the courtroom.

Eccentric sects like Jehovah's Witnesses are interested in the freedom of religion, but they are not much interested in the freedom of the press or any of the rest of the Bill of Rights.

Communists and other people likely to be investigated by Congress are interested in the Fifth Amendment, but not in the freedom of the press, or freedom of religion, or any other amendment.

Criminals are interested in the Sixth Amendment, but not in the freedom of the press, or freedom of religion, or any other amendment. They are not even much interested in the Fifth. They know that when the object of the prosecution is to send a man to jail, rather than to blacken his reputation, it will not attempt to prove its case by the silence of the defendant, but by outside evidence.

Extreme states' righters are interested in the Tenth Amendment, but not in First, Fifth, or Sixth.

People who are not or who do not expect to be publishers, members of eccentric sects, communists, criminals, or extreme states' righters are not likely to be much interested in civil liberties. In fact doubt has been expressed in the highest quarters as to whether the Bill of Rights could be adopted today.

It is not surprising that a feat of imagination and intelligence of which only you and the organizations you represent are capable is required if one is to interest oneself in the legal rights of others. The law is a difficult, technical subject. It is not always immediately intelligible even to those who have devoted their lives to its interpretation. Moreover, people who are in trouble with the law are likely to be unpopular, or even unattractive, and a feat of courage, as well as imagination and intelligence, is called for if one is to identify oneself with them. But I think the principal reason why civil liberties as traditionally defined and defended do not interest the American is that they are inadequate to express the true dimensions of the problem of freedom and justice today.

### *OLD WORDS FOR NEW CONDITIONS*

In the first place, we have developed to a fine point in recent years the art of ruination by due process of law. Many teachers in New York

and elsewhere, for example, are not teaching today because they refused to answer questions put to them by a board of education. They were not dropped because there was anything wrong with their teaching, or because there was anything proved wrong with their politics, but because they were "insubordinate." The process was due; the ruination was complete.

In the second place, even when the law is clear, the issues may remain. The example before our eyes is civil rights in the South. The question is not what the law is, but how to get it obeyed.

In the third place, we live in a new society, but we use the old words as though conditions were the same and all we had to do was to figure out the contemporary application of the old words in accordance with accepted canons of legal interpretation. But it is impossible, for example, to say what the Founding Fathers had in mind in framing the religious clauses of the First Amendment, and even if we knew, it might not help us much in deciding whether schools that did not then exist should be given assistance of a kind that was not then dreamed of.

Jefferson placed his hopes for the free society on education, self-employment, and local government. In last month's *Foreign Affairs*, Robert Oppenheimer correctly calls the American educational system a half-empty mockery. Seventy-five per cent of us now work for others. And anybody who seriously advanced the idea today that local government was a training ground for civic virtue would be instantly committed to an institution for the feeble-minded.

The Bill of Rights was designed to protect the citizen against the government, against the organized majority. But government is not what it was in the pre-industrial age, or even in the industrial age before the world was polarized. The bureaucratic society is one in which the citizen is remote from the center of power and largely helpless in dealing with it. It is a society characterized by the absence of personal responsibility, one in which, to paraphrase Mr. Truman, the buck never stops. The gravest decisions can be taken without anybody's knowing how it all happened. Foreign policy is the obvious case. Forces that may be let loose at any moment without any participation by the citizen are so enormous and so destructive that all he can do is to try to forget them.

At the same time that the state extends its powers on some fronts it seems to be withering away on others. The cumbersome and ineffective

efforts of government to deal with institutions that it itself has chartered; the failure of government in a field like education; the doubts and hesitations of government that have followed the decision of the Supreme Court on segregation in the schools may be attributed in part at least to the unreasoning notion that the state should wither away as fast as possible. In the case of institutions chartered by the government, it is sometimes difficult to tell who is controlling whom. The infiltration of government by the institutions it should control has become an American commonplace.

Since the adoption of the Constitution centers of private power have sprung up that are bureaucratized as the government and that are as influential, perhaps even more influential, in the lives of the citizens. A. A. Berle, Jr., has raised the question whether the pension trusts that have crept up on us unaware may not turn out to be a menace to economic freedom. Clark Kerr has asked how the union member, who was to obtain freedom and justice *through* the union, may now obtain freedom and justice *in* it.

### THE INTERCHANGEABLE MAN

The remorseless tendency of an industrial system, in which everything depends on smooth cooperation within large groups, appears to be to produce men who are not free in any real sense, and who may not even want to be free. We may say that the aim of industrialization is to get rid of men altogether, except as consumers, and in the meantime to make them interchangeable parts of the industrial machine. This has certain advantages in the field of civil liberties as they have been traditionally understood. Who cares about the race, color, creed, or politics of an interchangeable part? It may be that the industrialization of the South will do more to end racial discrimination there than all the legislation and preaching of the last fifty years.

But the interchangeable man is not a man. Since he is not, freedom and justice are of little interest to him. His aim must be to achieve peace, security, and success by being interchangeable, that is, through conformity.

Perhaps the most important reason why Americans are not interested in freedom and justice is that we are not altogether clear about what they are or how they can be invoked to illuminate our present situation.

A generation ago the Michigan Supreme Court condemned the suggestion of Henry Ford that a corporation might have other motives than profit. Last year Walter Reuther condemned the automobile manufacturers because, he said, their only motive was profit. Gardiner Means has remarked that contemporary economic theory cannot account for any of the major phenomena of contemporary economic life. And on the most basic of all issues, what is America, what do we stand for, we are not doing much better. With the rest of the world looking for leadership to the United States we have not been able to make striking contributions on any but the economic and military levels. Ideas and ideals that we suppose were clear to our ancestors have tended to become forms of words that are useful as rhetorical flourishes or political weapons but that have little visible effect on our daily lives.

The severity of the shock to American public opinion administered by the announcement that a Russian satellite was circumnavigating the globe can be taken to mean that we had confidence only in our technological superiority, in our power and wealth, and, when that was shaken, we had nothing to fall back on. In particular, we could not fall back on the superiority of our theory of society, because we could not clearly remember whether we had a theory, or what it was, or why it was superior.

Last week here in Washington at the large meeting on foreign aid, we were repeatedly warned that Russia, in pursuit of world domination, was attempting to encircle the United States. We were urged to give other countries money as one means of repelling this threat. But almost all the speakers felt it necessary to end on a higher note: they said we must have faith. There was some slight lack of clarity about what we were to have faith in. At times it seemed to be free enterprise. At other times it seems to be the Declaration of Independence. Yet since many of the nations to be aided do not have free enterprise, or do not adhere to the Declaration of Independence, I may be mistaken about this.

One eminent speaker said that our superiority to the Russians consisted in this, that we were a nation that believed in God, a remark which would have come as a shock to James Madison and which caused some stir among the unbelievers in the room. He went on to add that our natural ally was Islam, because it also believed in God, a statement not enthusiastically welcomed by the Jewish members of the audience, with whom the unbelievers joined.



## COMMON DENOMINATOR NEEDED

I hasten to say that I am in favor of foreign aid, of free enterprise, and of the Declaration of Independence. As to God I hope through Father Lally to establish my innocence by association. I am also in favor of accepting the challenge of Dr. A. J. M. van Dal of The Hague, Secretary-General of the International Commission of Jurists, who a year or two ago called for a simple set of fundamental principles expressing in a readily understandable way the common denominator of our legal-political beliefs. He said the democracies lacked definite purpose and clear conceptions of what they stood for and did not believe in any deep-rooted ideal. He said this situation often resulted in too much improvising, too much taking a stand on incidental issues, too much changing of ground, too much confusion, disagreement, and disappointment.

The fact is that social actions affecting freedom and justice have so far outrun social thought about them that those who would do something about freedom and justice are compelled to try to bring thought about them up to date. We should not be deceived by the present lull on the front on which you have been fighting or by your success in the battle you have just won. The latent know-nothingism in this country can rise to the surface at any time in response to any crisis, at the call of any sufficiently gifted or fortunate demagogue. The disease cannot be cured by dealing only with the symptoms. Nor can it be cured by incantation.

General Bradley has said that the central problem of our time is how to employ human intelligence for the salvation of mankind. The human intelligence that produced the hydrogen bomb should be equal to the task of saving us from it. So the intelligence that has given us our marvelously complex and productive civilization and that democracy which has been a light to the world for almost two hundred years should be equal to the task of creating the understanding and the dedication that the survival of the free society in the second half of the twentieth century requires. We may have enough faith in our fellow-citizens to believe that understanding and dedication will go hand in hand.

(The above article is a talk by Robert M. Hutchins to the National Civil Liberties Clearing House, Tenth Annual Conference, Washington, D. C. Robert M. Hutchins is the President of the Fund for the Republic, and the article is being reprinted here with his permission.)

# “The Most Wasted Hour?”

*by Virgil E. Foster*

Editor of the International Journal of Religious Education  
and author of “How a Small Church Can Have Good  
Christian Education” (Harper, 1956, \$2)

(This article is written in response to the article in LIFE magazine, February 11, 1957, by Wesley Shrader, called, “Our Troubled Sunday Schools.” Denominational and other magazines are at liberty to print it if it will be useful to them. It will be appreciated if each magazine using it will send a copy of the issue in which it appears to A. L. Roberts at 257 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.)

The Sunday morning church school hour has been labeled “the most wasted hour in the week” in an article by Wesley Shrader, of Yale Divinity School, in the February 11 issue of LIFE magazine. The author is not trying to damage Protestant Christian education by the negative picture he gives of Sunday schools. He tries, rather, to jolt local churches into taking drastic action toward improving their educational programs. A forthright facing of the situation will bring the acknowledgment that there is too much truth in the picture he presents to permit complacency. Severe as is his shock treatment, it is all to the good if it arouses churches to greater sincerity and thoroughness in their teaching ministry. Unfortunately, Dr. Shrader seems to have investigated more carefully the negative reports about Sunday schools than the facts about the great strides that are being made in developing effective Protestant Christian education.

The picture of emptiness, idleness, and waste which the article presents is not new. Christian education leaders, ministers, and alert lay leaders know that some of what goes on under the name of Christian education is terribly shoddy. They know that many teachers come to Sunday school poorly prepared, if at all; that many churches are content to use inferior materials; that many parents send their children and young people to Sunday school without sowing any significant seeds of respect or expectancy. The leaders have been calling these conditions to the attention of their churches for years. Furthermore, they have been following this up with far-reaching help in developing effective educational work.

Dr. Shrader goes on to indicate some of the things that need to be done to improve the situation, and tells of several churches which have developed effective Christian education.

The LIFE article does a most inadequate job of reporting the tremendous strides that are being made toward correcting the conditions it describes. Many churches have established Sunday schools which give an entirely different picture from the negative one given by Dr. Shrader. This is true far beyond the few churches he mentions in the positive part of the article, and this progress is not confined to the few denominations to which he refers with favorable comment.

For every story the article tells of children and young people giving negative testimony concerning the effect of the church school in their lives hundreds could be told of their peers in whose lives the church has been the doorway to a radiant life of faith.

In contrast with the stories of teachers who do a tragically superficial job of teaching, there are hundreds of thousands of teachers who take training for their work every year, who prepare carefully and well in advance, and whose teaching is warm with loving concern for the children or young people in their classes.

Over against the reports of poorly equipped churches are the thrilling stories of others which are spending large amounts of money to provide spacious, well-lighted ventilated rooms for their church schools. Over half a billion dollars is spent on new church buildings each year and a significant portion of it is going into church school facilities.

There is truly a tragic amount of parent disinterest; but there is an increasing number of churches with parent education programs which are helping families to put Christian teaching and worship at the heart of their home life.

But rather than marshal arguments to refute the picture presented in LIFE, the greater wisdom calls for the churches to look at their own programs honestly to see whether they are doing the four things Dr. Shrader suggests as being essential. Are they "strengthening their curriculum?" Are they using the curriculum materials prepared especially for them by their denominational leaders and are they using them as they are intended to be used? Are they securing "trained professional leaders?" If they cannot afford to secure a trained director of religious education, are they securing the help of professional persons to train and coach their teachers? Are they "training lay leaders" by sending

them to training conferences, workshops, and laboratory training schools? Are they providing them with resource books and magazines for week in and week out study? Are they "making the home a part of the Sunday school?" Or are they among the churches who have become easily discouraged and no longer try to get parent cooperation?

### *The Lay Witness*

At the heart of Protestant Christianity lies the faith in the priesthood of all believers. There is the conviction that even though lacking somewhat in organization, skill, and polish, the most effective witness is that which arises out of a dedicated and redemptive fellowship of believers. There is confidence that whatever this fellowship lacks in method—and it need lack nothing in method—can quickly be outweighed by the warmth of a witness born out of first-hand encounter with God in Christ Jesus and in the Scriptures.

Dr. Shrader gives the impression in his article that much of the work of lay leaders in the Sunday schools is inferior. He should remember that lay people saw the need of the Sunday school before the clergy saw it, and got the movement under way in this country nearly a century and a half ago largely without the help of the clergy and without their blessing. It was lay leaders who carried the movement forward during those long decades when there was no professional Christian education leadership.

Of course, trained and skilled lay leaders are essential. And for the inspiration of those who have let the stream of progress pass them by, let it be known that this year is the hundredth anniversary of the beginning of leadership education in the churches of America. Begun by a minister who was determined that his church should have the benefits of trained Sunday school leaders, the movement has expanded steadily through the years. During 1956 approximately 300,000 church school teachers and officers took training courses in order to acquire skill for their work.

The last fifteen years have brought phenomenal growth in leadership education. Training conferences giving basic courses for teachers have grown steadily. Workshops have been developed in which leaders analyze their own problems and learn teaching skills. Laboratory training schools and demonstration school give leaders training through observation and practice teaching. Institutes give brief refresher training and elementary training for new teachers. Clinic teams visit churches,



observe, and suggest ways of improvement. In-service training for coaching leaders on the job has been expanded beyond statistical measurement. Monthly workers' conferences and weekly departmental teachers' meetings have become effective training media in many churches.

### *Substance For The Witness*

The LIFE article might well have pointed out that the last fifteen years have brought the most solid and extensive experimentation and development in church school curriculum in Christian history. It can be stated safely that more money and energy have been spent in developing curriculum materials during those years than in all previous years of the Sunday school movement. And this development has not been confined to the denominations named in the LIFE article.

The curriculum field has been expanded to include parent education materials, teachers' magazines, and supplementary aids. Visual and project materials for pupils have been prepared. The publication of supplementary reading and resource books has expanded almost like an explosion. The preparation of audio-visual materials, guides, and equipment probably has been the most rapidly expanding activity within the church during those fifteen years.

Curriculum materials are being re-examined and revised constantly in order that they may be kept in line with the best developing insights in the fields of theology, biblical scholarship, psychology, teaching method and group procedures.

The denominations together have prepared a common curriculum for use in emergency areas, such as those around military establishments, and cooperate in the production of a common curriculum for vacation church schools and weekday schools of religion.

### *More Time For The Witness*

Recognizing that one hour on Sunday morning, even though used to fullest effectiveness, is not enough, churches have pressed for more time. Many of them have extended their church school sessions to one and a half hours, two hours, and even three hours on Sunday morning. Other have supplementary sessions during the week.

While churches are evaluating their Sunday schools it is well to recognize that the Sunday school is not the only Christian education

program. Vacation church schools are steadily increasing in number. They provide from one to four weeks of concentrated Christian education during the summer.

Weekday religious education on released time had its beginning nearly forty-five years ago, but has had an accelerated growth during recent years, in an effort to give boys and girls more religious education, and in the context of their weekday life. This is not a substitute for the Sunday school, but a supplement to it. There is the added advantage that weekday schools reach many children not receiving any other religious education.

One of the significant developments of the last fifteen years has been the expansion of the church's outdoor activities and the coming of a whole new approach to Christian nurture in the out-of-doors. These are no longer indoor programs moved outdoors. They are a distinctive kind of Christian education. In 1955, over 650,000 persons went to church camps and conferences.

One of the very important phases of Christian education is the young peoples' program. Yet the LIFE article might have said that the Sunday evening youth fellowship represents the second most wasted hour of the week. Many youth groups do waste their precious opportunities on Sunday evening. On the other hand, the phenomenal growth of the youth fellowship movement across the world would never have come through any desire to gather at the church for "horseplay" or to huddle around the radio and TV for shudder-and-shiver mystery programs. In their youth fellowships, young people who used to be thought of as "the hope of the church tomorrow" are having a profound experience of being a vital part of the church today. To be sure, many youth groups have poor leadership and accomplish little. But the drive behind the Christian youth movement is a deep concern for the discovery of the meaning of life, and for the responsibilities of a Christian in the modern world. There is endless testimony to this effect from young people themselves.

Church school, youth fellowship, camp, vacation church school, weekday school—wasted? They can be. They are in some places, sometimes. But they are also among the serious hopes for a Christian, peaceful world—when the people of individual churches take their Christian witness seriously and use the best materials and leadership training available. If Dr. Shrader's article contributes to that end it will perform a great service.

# The Chimera Of Christian Unity

"Some Basic and Explicit Problems in Mergers"

*W. Marshon De Poister, Orange, California*

Last September, a multigraph appeared on ISSUES IN UNITY. This composite amalgamation of material was assembled by the Council on Christian Unity of the Disciples of Christ. This was, and is, preparatory material for 10 Area Consultations on Christian Unity, of which this is one of the Consultations. These materials and Consultations are sponsored jointly by:

The Division of World Mission  
The Division of Home Mission  
The Council on Christian Unity  
The All Canada Committee  
Brite College of the Bible  
The College of the Bible at Lexington  
The Disciples Divinity House, Chicago  
The Divinity School of Drake University  
The Graduate Seminary of Phillips University  
Lynchburg College  
Northwest Christian College  
Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis  
Christian Missionary Society of Southern California

For reasons which may be apparent as we proceed, may I share with you once more the "Presuppositions . . . of the Consultations"?

## *PRESUPPOSITIONS*

The Consultations are projected on the basis of some specific presuppositions:

1. that as Disciples of Christ we are committed to the local congregation as the working base of the *Una Sancta*, but not the only nor in itself adequate manifestation of the Church Universal;
2. that as local congregations we are committed to cooperation in local and regional councils of churches, but do not hold these to be the final and fullest form of unity;
3. that as a people of common interests and with a specific responsibility in North America and abroad, we are committed to the

Brotherhood as an instrument of fellowship and fulfilment, but not the only, nor the fullest instrument of fellowship and ministry;

4. that as a communion we are committed to the fellowship of churches in the National and World Councils of Churches, and to other organizations in the ecumenical movement, but we press on toward fuller and more adequate realizations of the One, Holy, Catholic Church;
5. that as children of one God we are committed ultimately to the realization of one Church, one body, one faith, that this world may believe in one God; and to this end, these consultations are planned to consider *our* responsibility and direct our efforts.

Like most general statements and "presuppositions" which are supposed to inhibit irritations, this is tantamount to saying that we are all in favor of "love, marriage, and democracy." Something like the following "presuppositions" might have had more relevance—certainly they would have been more provocative!

1. that as Disciples of Christ we are committed to the local congregation as our institutional base of operation, but we recognize that we are only one denomination among many others and we must recognize that in some areas of church polity and religious philosophy perhaps other denominations are closer to "truth" than are we;
2. that as local congregations we are committed to cooperation in local and regional council of churches; and we recognize that effective cooperation involves compromise—a great deal of it!—and that if we are to be truly cooperative we must be prepared to *give up* some factors which we have held dear to our Disciple hearts for lo these many years;
3. that as a communion we are committed to the fellowship of churches . . . and to other organizations in the ecumenical movement, but we recognize that there probably will never be an institutional structure for One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church, and that if such a structure ever could be effected (which history refutes) it probably would not be a good thing;
4. that we shall never be able to "restore" any kind of a primitive organization in a modern setting and call it "the original basis for a Christian Church," for history refutes the very possibility of such;



5. that unity will never be achieved among Christians by reference to any "original source," certainly not Biblical passages.

#### BUT THAT!

6. The Disciples of Christ shall be forever committed to the tasks of conferences, consultations, discussions, cooperation, compromise, and innovation—to the end that we shall make our little contribution in our quest toward ultimate Truth, which we shall never achieve but which is always a worthy goal to seek.

It is highly presumptuous to assume that many\* of the basic and explicit problems of Christian unity could be presented in one brief or abstract. And if they were presented, adequate discussion and analysis would be even more presumptuous. It is my purpose, therefore, to call attention to only a few and particularly troublesome issues and bottlenecks. Some of these issues are real and objective; some are only presumed and apparent.

I should like to avoid much of the theological and philosophical factors involved in these discussions; for these factors, by and large, excite and interest only theologians and philosophers. I should say that *most* of the clergy, *practically all* church laymen, and 101% of all "sidewalk superintendents" couldn't care less about the fine-spun filigree of theological presumptions with respect to interdenominational associations and perhaps eventual unity.

The oft-repeated questions involve one main theme, though not often articulated: "How would a merger or a union affect *me*, *my* status, *my* church organization and its status among other denominations? All verbal filigree, double-talk, esoteric sentimentalism are meaningless except for people who love that kind of talk and substitute these approaches for intelligent and understandable concepts. Even as discerning and erudite a person as Charles Clayton Morrison would do well to study cultures anthropologically, historically and sociologically, as well as theologically, if he is to be able to delineate the factual from the fanciful, the objective from the abstract, the sensible from the idiocy.

Even some of the earliest historians realized that fact had to be separated from fancy, even as wheat from chaff, and that in order to do this it was necessary to see the organization of the church in the light of the current and historical sequences. It is impossible to separate theory and theology from culture! Even so, many theologians try. May

we at this point borrow a point from James E. Sellers as he writes in the most recent issue of KOINONIA concerning "A New Look at Christian Unity—or, Cyprian and Pogo as Confederate Theologians." Mr. Sellers writes:

For years, of course, Protestants have been more or less guilt-ridden by their divided state. We are apt to pause before the Fathers, in a self-conscious moment, and recall that "Unity" was one of the fundamentals of the ancient Church—the first item in the countdown for all the patriarchs. We read Cyprian, for example, and wince at the judgment he seems to be laying up for us. "Unity cannot be severed," he declares, "nor can one body be separated by a division of its structure, nor torn into pieces, with its entrails wrenched asunder by laceration. Whatever has proceeded from the womb cannot live and breathe in its detached condition, but loses the substance of health." (*On the Unity of the church.*)

Men are self-important even about their depravity, and we forget that Cyprian was not writing for the ages, much less for us (though his work has endured). He was battling for the Church's very existence against a clear and present danger. For Cyprian, in 251 A.D., disunity was already a bothersome and perilous fact. If the Church had been effectively one, as our illusion of a past "Golden Age" suggests, we may be sure that Cyprian would never have penned a single word proclaiming the virtues of oneness.

Nevertheless, Cyprian thought he knew what kind of unity the beleaguered Church ought to have. And his views would be healing to Protestants, if we could get around his use of what has become for us a loaded phrase. Cyprian expressed his ideal in the following rule of thumb: "There is one episcopate diffused through a harmonious multitude of many bishops." (*Epistle to Antonianus About Cornelius and Novation.*) Unfortunately, many of us never get farther, in analyzing this formula, than the word "episcopate."

. . . What both factions miss, caught up in the spell of the word "bishop," is Cyprian's actual description of working unity. The Church is "divided by Christ through the whole world into many members." Although the Church is one, it is "spread

abroad far and wide into a multitude by an increase of fruitfulness." We can find here, without doing too much violence to Cyprian, a practical ideal for Protestants:

As there are many rays of the sun, but one light; and many branches of a tree, but one strength based in its tenacious root; and since from one spring flow many streams, although the multiplicity seems diffused in the liberality of overflowing abundance, yet the unity is still preserved in the source.

For approximately 150 years the Disciples have been preaching and even haranguing about Christian Unity—prating about "where the Scriptures Speak and where the Scriptures are silent we are silent," etc. etc. etc., *ad-infinitum*, *ad nauseum*. During these 150 years we have been instrumental in producing no unions between anyone, even ourselves. There have been two schisms in our group (I almost used the word "denomination"—which we are!), and we are in imminent danger of a third rift.

It is all well and good to talk about the God-given Word, the Eternal Presence, the Abiding Spirit, Koinonia, a Community of Churches, Union in Faith, etc. etc., but unless pragmatic implementation is not only implicit but also explicit all our talk adds up to pleasant semantic pasttime on occasions such as this one we are now experiencing.

It is a painful stab at the heart of a thorough going and loyal Disciple of Christ to have it said that the concept of "Restoration of original Christendom" is dead. But it *is*! Let's give the concept a decent burial, close ranks, and go on—just as we do when a loved-one has lost earthly existence. Dr. Langdon B. Gilkey, Professor of Theology at Vanderbilt Divinity School, has skillfully laid open an old wound to examine it: "... if anything characterizes the Church, it is history. The Church above all is the community which through history preserves, preaches, witnesses and lives the Gospel; its essence, its function, and its reality are historical. And the problem of its unity can, therefore, only be understood clearly when its relation to its own embeddedness within history is understood. *This is the most basic reason that the early Disciples' theories of unity must be rethought.*" (italics mine—WMD.)

It is my painful duty to submit to this group and to the Disciples at large that in all bodies of Christians, Selfishness, Vested Interests,

Egoism, and obtuse psychological patterns of "Truth" are the real bottlenecks through which occasionally trickle intelligent words of humility with respect to Unity and Mergers. Let us ask ourselves a serious question: Suppose *every one* of the major tenets of the Disciples of Christ (those attributes which really distinguish us from other denominations) were suddenly to be wiped out, does anyone really believe that Christianity would cease to exist through the medium of other institutional structures? As I have given thought to this problem I cannot think of a single *unique* tenet or position in religious thought which the Disciples have cornered and which other Christian bodies do not have. There was *once* such a tenet, but we have long since forgotten about it, except as historians and philosophers will occasionally bring it to light. This was the concept of the application of Lockian empiricism to the structure of religion. Alexander Campbell did, indeed, believe in this somewhat unique feature, but this beautiful idea was quickly quashed by the legalistic verbiage which quickly sprouted around our institutional roots.

May I, therefore, submit to you some basic issues of ecclesiastical and personal vested interests:

1. What NAME shall be attached to an institutional structure of religion? We may, indeed, *say* that "... a rose by any other name," etc., but we do not really believe that. We even say with Gertrude Stein: "a name is a name is a name, is a name!" Writing the preparatory materials for these conclaves, Dean W. B. Blakemore of the Disciples Divinity House of the University of Chicago, speaks of "Specific Issues in Church Merger" and he very clearly analyzes some of the problems with respect to a merger with the United Church of Christ. One of these problems is the matter of an appropriate name for any merger or union. Dean Blakemore says, "The Disciples historically have made such an issue over names that perhaps it is best if in this paper we make no issue of the name of the United Church of Christ. However, there is an issue there, and we should be aware of the fact that for many denominations the name of the new denomination is presumptuous. Of course, they have always had this same feeling with respect to our use of the name Christian Church!"

Who is to say what the *proper* name should be for a group of people who purportedly are followers of the spirit of Jesus, the Christ?

## 2. ORDINATION AND MINISTERIAL TRAINING.

This item always raises many other questions. What is the *nature* of the ministry? Who is eligible for a ministerial position in the organiza-



tion? Should there really be a professional, paid ministry? Who will determine the standards for ordination? Who will apply these standards and actually ordain? Is ordination in one denomination valid and equal to the ordination in another denomination? If we believe we ought to have a trained and professional ministry, who will train and educate the insipient theologues?

### 3. DISPOSITION OF MISSION AND BENEVOLENT MONIES.

Always one of the most troublesome problems in contemplating any merger or union of an organic nature is that matter of spread of money which goes beyond the boundaries of the immediate church. In the merger of the Congregational-Christian Church with the Evangelical and Reformed Church this poses one of the most troublesome and even pernicious questions. It sounds so simple, but it may well be the straw which will break the camel's back. *The Basis of Union* has little to say about this except that a Committee of Twenty should be appointed to bring forth suggestions on methods of solicitation, collection and disbursement of missionary, benevolent and administrative funds. I wish them luck!

### 4. CONFESSIONS OF FAITH—INITIATION REQUIREMENTS—PRESERVATION OF MEMBERSHIP STATUS.

These are always areas for discussion and frequently for bitter debate. What are the specific mechanics and steps by which one may attain full fellowship with a religious organization? What must he periodically re-affirm in order to maintain full fellowship—presumably by announcing to his colleagues and to the public that, "this I still believe." What specific initiation rites must be experienced before one is really "kosher?" These questions, and many other related ones, have plagued religionists ever since before the days of Abraham!

Again, Dean Blakemore raises this problem with respect to the merger between the Congregational-Christian Church and the Evangelical and Reformed Church which has partly been consummated in the title of The United Church of Christ. The intricacies of this problem are cited by Dean Blakemore as he discusses the definition of membership in Article No. VII of the *Basis of Union*.

All persons who are members of either communion at the time of the union shall be members of the United Church. Men, women, and children who shall be admitted into the fel-

lowship of the United Church through baptism and profession of faith according to the custom and usage of each congregation prior to the union. When they shall have been admitted they shall be recognized as members of the United Church.

Dean Blakemore's further comment on this is, "Now this in a real sense only adds confusion, because we now have one standard for membership in the universal fellowship of the one holy catholic church, and another basis for membership in the congregations of the United Church.

Anyone who has the categorical answers to these tricky problems, let him stand forth and speak! Pax Vobiscum!

## 5. RECITATION OF CREEDS, CATECHISMS, ETC.

Always there appears a problem in institutional religion concerning the requirements of restatements of creeds, catechisms, etc. The question hinges around first, should there be creeds or anything like creeds in the stated requirements of the group? The other aspect impinges on the first; if one does admit creeds, catechisms, etc., what should be the requirements about testing one's knowledge of their meaning and what should be required in their periodic restatement?

Again, Dean Blakemore raises the question whether Article II in the *Basis of Union* constitutes a *creed* or not. This Confession (or creed) is as follows:

We believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator and Sustainer of heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord and Savior, who for us and our salvation lived and died and rose again and lives for evermore; and in the Holy Spirit, who takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us, renewing, comforting, and inspiring the souls of men. We acknowledge one holy catholic church, the innumerable company of those who, in every age and nation, are united by the Holy Spirit to God in Christ, are one body in Christ, and have communion with Him and with one another. We acknowledge as part of this universal fellowship all throughout the world who profess this faith in Jesus Christ and follow Him as Lord and Savior.

## 6. BAPTISM FORMS.

Here is the spot where inflexible Disciples of Christ are most likely to gag and sputter if it is ever proposed that some compromise or alter-

ing of our stated position is in order. There are many real and fundamental bottlenecks for the Disciples in the matter of union and merger, but perhaps none upon which the Disciples are more uncompromising or inflexible than on this one issue. It remains to be seen whether our various Councils on Christian Unity, Consultations, ministers and laymen will come to real grips with this aspect of the problem or whether we shall continue to pretend that it does not exist.

#### 7. MINISTERIAL EXCHANGE AMONG DIFFERENT DENOMINATIONS.

This problem is very closely related to No. 2 above, that of training and ordination standards. When is a minister a bona-fide minister? Will there be free exchange of clergy members by cooperating communions? If there are hesitations in accepting the clergy of each other, upon what will these differences be based and how may they be resolved?

#### 8. CONCEPTS AND DOGMAS WITH RESPECT TO CONGREGATIONAL POLITY.

This problem is, if anything, even more serious than the questions precipitated by the issues of Baptism. I should like, again, to refer to Dean Blakemore's wisdom as he discusses this problem with respect to the involvements between the Congregational-Christians and the E. and R.'s. As we know, these two bodies have a consistently different viewpoint concerning the meaning of congregationalism. Dr. Blakemore points out:

Historically there have been two distinct interpretations of what congregationalism is.

One of these asserts that all power and responsibility originates in the congregations; other elements of the church have power and responsibility only as the congregations have granted them that power and responsibility. This is the theory that usually is operative in those who insist that our state and international conventions should be conventions of the churches in order that the will of the churches can be carried out. This is a very popular point of view among Disciples today, and it is precisely the point of view put forward by the Cadman group which sought to prevent the merger that resulted in the United Church of Christ!

The other theory of the meaning of congregational polity is the one which asserts that while the congregation has its own sphere of autonomy, every other level of church life has its own autonomy, and all of these must be safeguarded. This is the theory that is held by these Congregationalists who have furthered the merger; it is a theory as old as congregationalism itself and has been revived in our day by Douglas Horton and others. There is not time at this point to develop this theory in detail. All that can be done is to say that it refutes both the idea that there is some central power such as papacy or episcopacy from which all power derives, and the idea that all power derives from congregations. In other words, it refutes both the top-down and the bottom-up theories of power and authority by asserting the emergence of new powers, responsibilities, and authority at every level of organization as that level of organization comes into being. The fact that the United Church of Christ accepts this moderate definition of congregational polity rather than the radical congregationalism which is so very wide-spread amongst the Disciples of Christ raises a very sharp issue with us as we contemplate merger with the United Church of Christ. The position of the United Church implies far more freedom than the typical Disciple is likely to want to grant for such units as UCMS, Board of Church Extension, and all other agencies, and certainly far, far more than our Independents, who represent the most extreme possible form of congregationalism, would accord.

9. DEGREE OF IMPORTANCE OF HISTORIC AND STATED THEOLOGIES, WITH RESPECT TO: (A) *PERSON* OF JESUS, (B) *NATURE* OF THE CHURCH, (C) HIERARCHICAL STATUS OF THE CLERGY, (D) INTERPRETATION OF HOLY WRIT, (E) ETC. ETC.

With respect to these questions, we must at once recognize that there has never been any universal agreement concerning the *person* of Jesus. The *nature* of the church has always been a matter of intense debate. The clergy and laymen alike have never been able to reach a universal dogma about the hierarchical nature of the clergy. We are also fully aware of the fact that relying on Holy Writ as a source of unification has been a will-o-the-wisp. Dr. DeGroet, and many others, have long since pointed out that returning to the Scriptures for an absolute pattern of an institutional structure is divisive and not unitive.



## 10. NATURE OF SIN, ERROR, AND FORGIVENESS.

Although these items are deeply immersed in theological double-talk, they still are relevant questions for plain-vanilla clergyman and layman.

### A CONCLUSION

Theological differences at the present time are little more than the differences between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. Yet they divide the Christian heritage, split up the faithful, confuse the outsider, and engage in a wasteful and expensive competition for members and money that greatly weakens respect for religion and reduces the ministry of all churches to a condition of prestige poverty and social inferiority and even public scorn. The enormous cost of upkeep, the extravagance of some missionary departments, the overheads of the boards, secretaries, field secretaries, archdeacons, bishops, presiding elders, and a swarm of paid officials who do *no* pastoral work but go about laying grievous burdens upon the ministers of all denominations in order that the competition may be kept up, are a few of the evils of the present divided state of the Christian churches in America. This condition is both disgraceful to America and injurious to our civilization. It presents religion without dignity and without intelligence.

Any scheme of corporate unity is beyond the diplomatic skill at the present time of even the most astute ecclesiastical leaders. It is not a matter of practical politics. If it is, as is so often asserted, the divine will, then it is on a par with the other great and ultimate ideals. "Be united" can only be compared with "Have all knowledge," or "Agree on Ultimate Truth," or "Sustain perfect charity," or "Be devoid of prejudice." It belongs to the eternal categories. It is an excellent aim, but a mystical attainment. The individual may have the feeling for it, but he cannot materialize or demonstrate it.

"If there were only one church in the world," President Dwight of Yale used to say, "I would feel that I had a call from God to go out and start another one."

In every department of human knowledge except religion the attainment of truth has now for a long time been regarded as progressive. In religion it was and is yet conceived as something long since fully revealed, fixed and final. It is only in comparatively recent times that intellectual religious men have come to think of religious knowledge as

being in the same category with all other knowledge, a matter of progress. Religion may not be presented solely for the edification of the intellectual, but there is no use in alienating them!

With its hundreds of millions of followers it is surprising that there is as much unanimity of opinion in Christianity as there is. There are racial divisions and cultural divisions, college presidents and savages, statesmen and jailbirds, intellectuals and masses of unwashed peasants, all over the green world, and all alike claim a share in the benefits of religion as their most precious heritage. Probably no two people have quite the same ideas on the subject!

Cardinal Newman, after his conversion, felt that truth was to be found not in the *Via Media* but in extremes. Certainly the extreme positions in the matter of religion are more readily stated and easier to grasp. To attempt a synthesis of the extremes of recognized theological positions, to unite in a single authoritative body the churches, is a dream similar in kind to the schemes to eliminate poverty, to create a universal language, to destroy capitalism, to perfect governments, to make democracy safe for the world, to determine taste, to reach Utopia. It is the delight of secretaries, the despair of honest men. Clergymen, always incurable idealists on the lookout for good homiletic material, fall for it regularly. Its deficiency supplies the explanation for inefficiency.

The best that can be done is to *aim* at the ideal. Keep working *toward* the ideal. Keep *talking about* the ideal. Make proposals whereby a *start can be* made toward the ideal. It is well to remember that character is to be judged not by what it is but by what it tends to become. Let results take care of themselves.

# Disciple Dilemmas Or Opportunities For Doing Some Thinking

by W. B. Blakemore, Chicago

In an earlier issue of *The Scroll*, there appeared from my pen an article entitled "Our Ecumenical Dilemma." This paper presents three more areas wherein our Disciple history and tradition now places us in dilemma.

By pointing up our dilemmas I do not intend to be pessimistic, but rather to be helpfully optimistic. The Editor of *The Scroll* has asked me to write a word concerning the future of the Campbell Institute. It seems to me that the future of the Campbell Institute is what it has always intended to be in any future—to provide an encouraging arena for thinking through the problems that should be thought through—and which might not be tackled otherwise. Rather than develop at length some "program" for the Institute, though that task needs to be done, I will point out in this paper three major problem areas about which Institute members should be thinking and writing. Others can make suggestions of other relevant topics—and if we get to work on them, the Editor of *The Scroll* will have more than enough copy to keep his pages filled—and if we think strongly and write relevantly an audience will be attracted and the journal will make its way—almost. No "little magazine" ever quite makes its way, and since *The Scroll* is one of the biggest "little magazines" in the field of religion it has always needed some help—and probably always will—but it is a very worthwhile enterprise to help.

Nor do I mean to suggest that these areas of dilemma are areas in which our history and tradition have proven to be wrong. I mean to suggest that they are areas in which we are in a state of dilemma. We don't know whether our historic position is right or wrong. We know only that these are areas in which our historic position is challenged. Therefore we are "hung up" and will not know either what to think or what to do in these areas until we join the issue and find our way through to more clear insights.

Besides the Ecumenical Dilemma discussed earlier, there is dilemma for us in the following situations:

1. Traditionally we have affirmed the individual and his right to be inwardly directed, but we exist now in an "other-directed" age.

2. Traditionally we belong to the Enlightenment stream of rationalism. Today that stream has been largely discredited by the findings of recent psychology.

3. Our brotherhood was largely fashioned on the frontier to meet frontier conditions. Those conditions have not existed for seventy years, and today we are caught in the cross currents of a changing America with equally strong and contrary trends of urbanization and ruralization. There is urbanization at the technical levels of our civilization, and an amazing ruralization of customs and mores which is penetrating deep into the hearts of our cities.

# I

*Individualists in an "other-directed age."* The terms "inner-directed" and "other-directed" are rapidly becoming familiar. They are terms devised by Dr. David Riesman, formerly professor of sociology at the University of Chicago, now at Harvard University. He uses the terms to indicate a radical change which has occurred in the American character during this century. Dr. Riesman points out that prior to 1900 the typical American was a person whose conduct and behavior was determined by something inside of him. That something was either a well indoctrinated set of rules and principles, or it was the individual's own personal expectations. When men moved out onto the lonely frontier they either had their own principles built into them, or they collapsed. During the last century a man lived by these precepts—many of them learned at his mother's knee—and the direction of the influence was always from the individual towards society. Men were building and rebuilding society according to their own inward character.

Dr. Riesman in his masterpiece, *The Lonely Crowd*, fully documents his thesis that within this century there has come a radical change which means that the influence now runs from the society to the individual. The typical American of today does not turn inward to discover what should be done. He looks outward and asks, "What does society expect or need of me?" He has given up the autonomy of his



forefathers and seeks instead to fulfill the demands of his society, his peers and his "group." In contemporary America, everyone is some kind of "corporation man." The "other-directed" man expects the group to which he belongs to give him very definite indications regarding conduct and belief. In a society where each man is supposed to be his own guide, the "other-directed" man finds no meaning in life. Following are some famous old Disciple slogans. Each of them implies an individualism of the kind which is now largely gone from the American character. As a result, each of these slogans now feels antiquated, or wishy-washy—and we find that we do not often use them. They represent an attitude which has put us in a dilemma.

"Every man shall be free to interpret the Scriptures without let or hindrance."

"No one can speak for the Disciples. Every man has a right to his own beliefs."

"There cannot be a heresy trial amongst us."

"We are bound together by a simple confession of faith and obedience to the Christ."

But today's man wants more than these slogans offer. He wants a theology. He wants things "spelled out." He expects the group to tell him what to believe—or at least to indicate some major directions of his belief. Today's students in Disciple seminaries are anxious about the Disciple position. We have even come to the point where a "Panel of Scholars" has been formed to help discover what are our beliefs. Such a panel would have been unthinkable forty years ago. At that time, a Disciple "Congress" might meet, but it would be characterized by strongly personal statements from dominant individuals. The idea of a panel which might derive a restatement of the Disciple position is definitely the product of an other-directed age and not the product of our historic attitudes. We may eventually reaffirm our traditional individualism. But at present it places us in a dilemma, and we are making the attempt to discover whether we can adjust and begin to behave in ways satisfactory to the "other-directedness" of the contemporary American personality.

## II

*Enlightenment and Irrationality.* The classic Disciples definition of faith is that it is belief in testimony. As anyone who has had a short

introduction to our history knows, this definition of faith was adopted by Alexander Campbell on the basis of the sensationalist psychology of John Locke. With this definition of faith, one approaches the Bible as a record of historic facts which provide the testimony on which faith is based. This classic approach to the Bible, especially to the record of Jesus' life, is still the approach used by most Disciples. For the great majority the biblical record is taken uncritically. For others, textual, historical, and higher criticism are important; but they never abandon the idea that it is possible to discern the outlines of the historical Jesus and on this basis of fact to discern the object of faith. In respect to the character of faith, there never was any significant difference between the conservative Disciples and the liberal. Both appealed to a reasonable basis of Christianity in the gospel facts—for some those facts were to be found only within the biblical word, but for many they might be found also in the world at large.

The Disciples definition of faith is only one aspect of their rationalism. They have always hoped to have a reasonable religion. They want to be practical. They want what they do to be rid of every least trace of magic, myth, and superstition. They have always wanted to be able to talk about Jesus in a natural, historical kind of way, and to see in him the embodiment of the rational man. Above all they have wanted a religion based on fact.

Today, this kind of Enlightenment rationalism is sharply criticised from at least two sides. Historicism and objectivity have had to give some ground in the recognition of the mythical character in which much of our knowledge exists, particularly our knowledge of the more concrete things such as life, and self, and the universe, and God. The second attack has come from the newer psychologies which have discerned the frailty of the human thinker. He is caught, not only in historical and social relativities, but in very personal and egoistic relativities. Dr. Sigmund Freud began a revaluation of the trustworthiness of the human mind. While psycho-analysis may have led to an extreme criticism of our mental powers, it has made it impossible any longer to adopt the idea of a mind competent to grasp truth without any alloy of personal and sociological bias. Unfortunately, the Disciples of Christ must admit that the last significant synthesis of their thought—namely the "liberal" synthesis worked out by the Chicago school—was pre-Freudian. It rewrote the psychology of Christian experience in terms of the psychology of William James, but it never tackled the implications of the work of the psycho-analysts. Today we proceed with our enlightenment theology, and still talk about faith as if it were a response to some clearly presented

historical facts. That is our traditional way, and we know that it is outgrown. We do succeed in communicating the gospel, but it is happening in spite of our traditional rationalism and definition of faith, not because of it.

### III

*The "Frontier" and the "Rural-Urban" Cross Currents.* It is nearly thirty years since W. E. Garrison wrote *Religion Follows the Frontier*. This book remains a landmark of Disciple history because it showed the way in which our movement was, for nearly a century, shaped by the frontier. The frontier provided the challenge which the Disciple ministry met. In one sense, the frontier was our leader and we were its followers, not only geographically, but ideologically and emotionally. Then, suddenly the frontier was gone. In its place there rapidly developed a complex civilization.

The frontier was closed in the 1890s. Men mourned its loss, and as recently as twenty years ago they were telling us, "Do not weep, there is a new frontier on which you can work; the frontier today is the inner city, the slum, the growing metropolis with all its problems." When these statements were made it sounded as if we were being told, "Since there is a new 'frontier,' the principles derived on the original frontier still apply." Unfortunately, that is not the case. The term "frontier" when applied to the problems of the city is not a guiding concept but only an inspiring metaphor. The Disciples of Christ have had a hard time learning how to minister in the great cities. We remain predominantly a county-seat movement.

Furthermore, we have become utterly confused in the cross-currents of urbanization-ruralization in contemporary American life. Most of us have been so amazed at the technical urbanization which has carried electricity and the television to every corner of the land that we have been blind to the ruralization which has carried onto college campus and into every city square the mores of the last century. The signs of the new ruralization, which is a phenomenon of the 1940s and 1950s, are numerous. Ecologically, it is to be seen in the great influx of "southerners" into "northern" industrial centers, or, more properly stated, of folk moving from non-industrial to industrial centers. Despite the great mixing of populations which ensues, there is a marked increase of regionalism at the present time. Partly it is abetted by the approaching centenary of the Civil War. Even more marked as an instance of the new ruralization is the virtual rejection by the young people of the



forties and fifties of the courting and marriage patterns of their immediate forefathers. The March, 1957, issue of *Harper's Magazine* carried an article entitled *American Youth Goes Monogamous* which points out that despite the lurid headlines of the daily paper, American youth generally has revived the sexual practice of its nineteenth century great-grandfathers—courting only one girl, and an early marriage, with its concomitant radical lowering of sexual temptations of an illicit character—and an upswing in the size of families.

A fourth evidence of the new ruralization is the spectacular rise of fundamentalism, notably in its Southern Baptist and Church of Christ forms. The resurgence of these two groups in particular is interesting because they represent a nineteenth century rural form, whereas the Nazarenes and Assemblies of God, which are to be understood as a twentieth century emotional response to the insecurities of an industrial civilization, give some evidence of being in trouble except where they have modified in fundamentalistic and sober directions. Now, it might be supposed that the Disciples of Christ would profit from a period of ruralization. But this seems to be not the case. It is the Southern Baptists and the Church of Christ who are profiting. The Disciples were a frontier people—a frontier *town* people. In the twentieth century, the frontier town is largely gone. It has a slight counter-part in the growing edge of the great metropolitan centers, and there, if we write about the positive elements in our tradition, we are not in a dilemma at present.

I do not want to be misunderstood with respect to the presentation of these dilemmas. I indicated in an earlier *Scroll* that in the long run we may discover that our simple plea for Christian unity is right. It may yet be shown that our relatively optimistic estimate of man as a rational creature can be maintained. It may yet be shown that there are virtues in individualism which our "other-directed" age lacks, and that those virtues must be re-affirmed. But the present trends of thought put us in a dilemma on these points. With respect to them we are today in the minority. We must find out whether on each of these points we should depart from our tradition and shape a new view, or whether we have the truth and should stick by it. With respect to the four areas of dilemma—ecumenicity, rationalism, individualism, the frontier—there is only one area in which it is obvious that we must re-examine and reconstruct, namely, with respect to the frontier. For good or ill, it is obvious that population is rapidly increasing, and we are going to be more and more urbanized in our civilization—though it is by no means clear, despite the new trends of ruralization, what we shall become culturally.



# A Letter To Dean Blakemore

THE MONTANA SCHOOL OF RELIGION

affiliated with

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

Missoula

May 26, 1958

Dr. W. B. Blakemore, Dean  
Disciples Divinity House  
University of Chicago  
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Mr. Blakemore:

A friend sent me the winter edition of *The Scroll* which included your article on the next steps ecumenically for the Disciples of Christ. I am not a member of the Campbell Institute (though I would like to be) and I did not find any address in the publication for writing to the editor, so I am taking the liberty of writing directly to you to express my reactions.

From this article and the one in the Dec. 4 issue of *The Christian Century* I gathered that the hope of the conciliar movement as a vital expression for Christian unity lies at least partially in their assuming some of the ecclesiastical functions of the churches which are now cherished denominationally. I assume that this would have to begin in such areas as missionary outreach, establishing of comity plans for new areas, and such realms of activity as are now at least partially under council jurisdiction. But regardless of the particular areas where this would take place, I believe that there are some fundamental difficulties that must be recognized.

First, councils are generally based on cooperation of Christians who have a similar approach to Christian outreach in the world. Their purposes seem to be generally in the realms of activity rather than in realms of worship or fellowship. When they are brought into these latter areas they almost always seem to break down. For example, here in Missoula the Episcopal Church is a member of the Missoula Council of Churches, but when the council considers a program such as a union Good Friday or Thanksgiving service, they must do it without the cooperation of the Episcopal group.

A second major problem is that there are no councils which are themselves all-inclusive. The prime example nationally is the NCC and the NAE. Between these two councils is a spirit as strong, or stronger,

than the spirit of denominationalism that would exist between super-sized denominations. The American Council of Christian Churches adds another group to this field. The growth of councils, in other words, seems to offer the same kind of dead end as the growth of denominations by merger—there are some areas where Christians seem to be so far apart that they will not soon come together.

Your article mentioned a “conciliar instinct” of Disciples. I wonder if this has not been the instinct of looking for the easy way out of a problem. Too many people have turned to councils because they offer opportunities of apparent expressions of unity without the dangers of losing one’s denominational bias. They are often mentally a substitute for unity. Could this be our “conciliar instinct?” It has allowed us to work with those who differ on matters of baptism, organization, or ministry, without any giving up of our own biases or asking them to give up theirs.

In your article you make a statement of the comparative values of our contributions both to the conciliar movement and in the area of denominational merger. It seems to me that the value of “efforts” in either area is not nearly as important as the value of insights and attitudes which we might contribute. I believe the contribution of these is important in both areas, along with our “efforts.” After all, the value or lack of value of efforts is a rather pragmatic judgment, and will depend on many factors. The values of attitudes and ideals are much more specifically related to the attaining of Christian unity and will hold regardless of the practical aspect of whether a particular structure “works” or not.

There are some of us who, as Disciples, have done some penitential breast beating not because we have failed to merge with anyone else, but because we have become so denominationally minded that we ourselves raise barriers to Christian unity—regardless of how it might be expressed. There is indeed need for penitence whenever we find that we have allowed ourselves to be separated from other Christians. We can say that it is others who have shut us out, but this is only a salving of the conscience for the walls we have erected—walls of demanding immersion as the only possible interpretation of baptism, of demanding that the Lord’s Supper is a memorial and not a partaking of the physical body of Christ, of negating all value in the act of infant baptism, and so on. We say glibly, “We have no creed but Christ,” but in most of our churches we have established a pattern of teaching just as rigid as that of the most credal denominations—though perhaps not covering as many points of theological dogma.

The difference between growth of councils and denominational merger as two roads to Christian unity is not a difference of kind, but only one of means. These are the vehicles in which we move, rather than the road we intend to follow, and both vehicles meet the same problems and obstacles. If it is true now that the councils do not have the churchism of denominations, then it is also true that when the councils take over churchly functions they will be subject to the same churchism. If it is true that "merger does not radically alter . . . the churchism of denominations" because of a more jealous guarding of prerogatives by the larger group, then it is also true that growth of councils does not radically alter the larger divisions which exist between major groups of denominations today because each large council will be more jealously guarding its own position of liberalism, fundamentalism, or orthodoxy.

Unity is not necessarily a matter of structure. There is no structure available, whether it be super-councils, super-denominations, or super-anarchy, that can provide unity. Unity is and must be a unity of the spirit of Christians. If there is unity of spirit, then it will probably be expressed structurally as Christians who feel they are together seek to work together. But the form of structure here is of secondary importance. The only question is, "What form will best express and expedite our united work as Christians?"

We need to continue to work for Christian unity in every way possible. If the only means available is that of conciliar relations, then we must use them. If denominational merger offers the only opportunity, then we cannot deny it. If it should appear that our best method would be to dissolve our own organizations and infiltrate the denominations, then this ought to be our plan. But just as the existence of a single person not committed to God ought to spur us ever to evangelistic efforts, so a single division among Christians ought to spur us to whatever action is possible in uniting all Christians as the visible body of Christ.

I would appreciate any information that you might give me concerning membership in the Campbell Institute. I will leave it to your own discretion whether this letter should be forwarded to the editor of *The Scroll* as one answer to his request for comments.

Sincerely,

(Signed)

Glenn R. Johnson

Montana School of Religion

Montana State University

# Reflections On Blakemore's "Ecumenical Next Steps"

Dr. Blakemore's article on "Ecumenical Next Steps" may well be a landmark in Disciple thought. It captures a mood which has been slowly growing in stature in ecumenical conversations—namely that each denomination must truly stand for its unique insights without shame or apology. This is possible in "conciliarism" as it can never be in "merger" unity. The purpose of this series of comments on Dr. Blakemore's thesis is to point out three contemporary supports for the idea of conciliarism.

The first support comes from present-day theologians who emphasize the incarnation. This doctrine asserts that God and His revelation were hidden in Christ, that God did not and does not reveal Himself absolutely through some event or word which can be *externally grasped and confined by the Church*. As long as Christians continue to believe in such an incarnation, various Christians are likely to find different interpretations of that which is hidden. No person or group can ever be quite certain that he has penetrated the entire secret. Thus, he must always be engaged in conversations with others whose conception of God's Truth is unlike his own. This serves as a theological basis for conciliarist ecumenicity.

A second support comes from the study of church history. Dean Sydney Mead of Chicago's Meadville Seminary has engaged for years in a friendly debate with his colleague, James Hastings Nichols, about American ecumenicity. Nichols stresses the Old World idea of a single Church as the ideal form of Christianity. Mead thinks this does too little justice to God's continued revelation which in America has taken the form of "the American experiment." In this experiment, God is working out new patterns for the Church, patterns of which American Christians should be proud even if they do not coincide with old World precedents. The Disciples of Christ, in spite of the oft-repeated boast of being the earliest denomination originated on American soil, have too often been ashamed of failure to participate in Old World-style mergers as a measure of ecumenicity.

A third support stems from the example offered by the American system of political parties as a means of discovering political truth. In this system each party has a truth for which it is responsible in its appeal to the citizenry. Neither party, however, can ever disregard the



existence of or work to destroy the total effectiveness of the party holding the opposite point of view. Inherent in the system is the tension between the definitions of truth as given by the opposing groups. Granting all the criticisms which can be levied against mobs or crowds voting as to what is really true, there is still a legitimate Christian sense in which the individual churches as custodians of different facets of the truth need to enter into a discussion in much the same sense as political parties do.

As a sort of footnote it should be pointed out that we Disciples ought not to be too happy about conciliar ecumenicity. All too many of our attitudes are not only opposed to mergers; they are opposed also to effective councils. We are never free from the institutional pride which corrupts and frustrates Christian fellowship. We have much to learn about responsible participation in conciliar ecumenicity.

We can be grateful to Dr. Blakemore for reminding us of the direction in which we may profitably move.

(Authorship of the above is either unknown or misplaced. Will author please step forward and acknowledge himself.)

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The Campbell Institute founded in 1896 is an association for ministers and laymen of the Disciples of Christ for the encouragement of scholarship, comradeship, and intelligent discipleship.

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# THE SCROLL

The Journal of the Campbell Institute

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## EDITORIAL NOTE

The Editor of the *Scroll* for 1958-59, W. Marshon DePoister, found it necessary to resign from that position because he was leaving Chapman College, Orange, California to go into private business. It has fallen to your president, therefore, to get out this summer number of **The Scroll**.

We appreciate the service which Marshon has given the Campbell Institute during these past two years as editor of **The Scroll**. This has often been a discouraging task, since members are lax in sending in material for publication and those solicited often find it necessary to refuse. We know Marshon will continue his interest in *The Scroll* and hope he will continue to send in thought provoking articles like those he has written in the past.

The current issue of **The Scroll** contains a number of articles on a wide variety of subjects. The first is one by your president outlining his understanding of the task that lies before the Campbell Institute at the present time and some of the plans that have been made in discharging his duty. The second is an article by the editor of **The Christian Evangelist-Front Rank**, which he kindly consented to write on the topic we are using as our theme this year. The third is a stimulating essay by Loren R. Fisher on a subject of great interest now. Loren is professor of Old Testament in the Graduate Seminary of Phillips University and recently received his Doctor of Philosophy degree from Brandeis University. The fourth is a paper by William C. Howland, Jr., which he, as head of the section discussing "Specific Issues in Church Merger" at the Area Consultation on Christian Unity at Phillips University, read to those present. Your president heard this paper and felt that all of you would profit from reading this penetrating treatment of issues sometimes dodged. The last is an article by William J. Nottingham, dealing with an interesting project with which he is closely associated.

We hope all of you are thinking and reading and that these activities will issue in papers for **The Scroll**. Francis Bacon proffered the advice that "Writing maketh an exact man". We think you need this discipline. We think you should share the results with **The Scroll**.

— George G. Beazley, Jr.

# THE CAMPBELL INSTITUTE RIDES AGAIN

GEORGE G. BEAZLEY, JR.

First Christian Church, Bartlesville, Oklahoma

In 1896 the brotherhood of churches now called the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) was in grave danger of degenerating into a sect. The broad movement out of which these churches had been precipitated had originally been vital and creative. Its leaders had been interested in blazing new trails in Christian unity and church polity. While many of their presuppositions about the scriptures did not differ markedly from those of the rest of the theologically contented Christendom, and while their thought was unaffected by the continental movements in biblical studies, that were to produce a major revolution in our understanding of the Bible, Barton, Stone, Thomas and Alexander Campbell, and Walter Scott did go to the scriptures with an expectancy of finding forgotten truths and with an excitement that kept their listeners and readers in a permanent state of argument and debate with those who preferred conserving the *status quo* to venturing into a new understanding of that on which the Bible spoke.

Now this had changed. In his latter years Alexander Campbell had been more interested in reliving the creative days of his past than in rethinking his earlier position. Nevertheless, it was his more immediate past that he relived. His living presence kept those who had progressed no farther than his **Christian Baptist** position from using his words for their purpose. With the close of the Civil War and the new conditions born out of the bitterness of reconstruction, and with the expansion of an exploding industrialization of the nation, those who saw the purpose of the brotherhood as the task of restoration and who saw no necessity for the church modifying its rural prejudices to make itself effective in a more sophisticated and urbanized culture, not only reaffirmed the Campbell of the **Millennial Harbinger** period but returned to the youthful destroyer of all organizational procedure of the **Christian-Baptist** era. The assumption of all of these leaders, rampant against open communion, musical instruments in worship, and paid and settled ministers known as pastors, and indeed of many men who did not share their hate against organization, was that the early years of our movement had completely explored and restored the church of the New Testament period and that no new truth about the nature of the church, which they saw as uniform and thoroughly crystallized, was possible. The two groups differed in the principles of application. The more conservative faction felt that where the scriptures did not speak innovation was prohibited. The more progressive faction felt that where the scriptures did not speak innovation was permissible and must be expected. With a few notable exceptions, however, both were agreed that the fathers of our movement had explored all possible interpretation of the New Testament church and had discovered the one pattern by which it was organized and the two definitely described ordinances which it observed. Almost no one ever asked if the church was really as uniform as those excited and creative early nineteenth century reformers



felt it was and if its faith was so easily congenial to the psychological and governmental presuppositions of John Locke, who had so surely, though indirectly, shaped the frame of reference in which they thought.

It is a fact of our history, deplored by some and regarded as cathartic by others, that the two factions separated in 1906, to form the Disciples of Christ and the Churches of Christ. That this inevitable separation took so long to become open was due to three factors. Our traditional plea for unity made us self conscious about schism and reluctant to own up to a division that actually had existed since shortly after the Civil War and that had been urged upon us by some of the leaders of the more conservative faction. The rapid expansion of our numbers and our penetration into the vast reaches of territory acquired by our government in 1803 and 1848 had kept us so busy with evangelism and the founding of new churches that we did not have time to carry our division into open breach. Equally important, or perhaps more determinative, was the fact that, while the leaders had defined their stand on this issue, the lay people, and even many of the ministers, were not fully cognizant of the difference and consequently were not sure where they stood.

While this question was in ferment and long before the formal division of 1906 had taken place, forces in Christendom and movements in the culture of America were forcing upon the Disciples of Christ another issue that was to lead to another division among them, a division now very real and inescapable, but which has not yet become formal. These forces were just appearing on the horizon in 1896 when thirteen young men and one young woman formed The Campbell Institute. This society, which was for mutual encouragement in scholarship, in personal religious living, and in publication, was both a symptom of these forces and one of the main channels by which they made themselves felt in the brotherhood. It was not self-consciously such a channel, for despite the many accusations brought against it by its detractors, The Campbell Institute was never intended to be used as a technique for power nor a method for the education of others. It always has been and is today merely a forum for the free discussion of any and all issues involved in Christian thinking, living and church government and a mutual association for people who wish to encourage one another in a search for truth through an atmosphere of friendly freedom. Dr. W. E. Garrison, the one surviving member of the original fourteen, has told the story of the origin of The Campbell Institute, both in *The Disciples of Christ, a History*, which he and Dr. A. T. DeGroot authorized, and in the Spring 1959 issue of *The Scroll* which is part four, volume fifty of this magazine through which The Campbell Institute has encouraged free discussion through publication.

The first of these movements which was forcing a new issue on our brotherhood was the rise of the new biblical studies in Europe and their importation in America, where they produced scholars like William Rainey Harper and Benjamin W. Bacon who made their own original contributions to these researches. Like Stone, the Campbells, and Scott, these new scholars in Europe and America went back to the Bible to see what it really said. Like our early leaders their mood was one of expectancy and excite-

ment. Like these, they stimulated expectancy and excitement in others. Like the fathers of our movement, they had slight respect for churchly pre-conceptions, no matter how hoary with age or how sacrosanct in the eyes of the clergy. They followed where their discoveries led, unmindful how many sacred cows were slaughtered in the process. Their learning, however, was much more elaborate than that of our early leaders. Most of them were thoroughly versed in the new literary criticism that was discovering levels of composition in the Homeric poems, were proficient not only in classical Greek and Hebrew but in the new lexical aids that had come through the discovery of the lost papyri in the sands of Egypt, were acquainted with other near Eastern languages, only dimly known in the early nineteenth century, and had a larger grasp of the world in which the Hebrews and early Christians had lived and thought, because archaeology was opening up a knowledge of that world that had not been available to men since its collapse in the fifth century A.D. The frame of reference in which these men thought was different from the Lockean world of Stone, the Campbells, Scott and the whole Jeffersonian-Jacksonian era of American history. Some of them, such as Anstruc and Strauss were children of the Enlightenment, but of a more radical wing than Locke had represented. The others were conditioned by the Kantian view of man and its theological expression in Schliermacher and Ritschl and by the Hegelian view of history.

The impact of this new force in Christendom made itself felt among the Disciples in many waves, the first two of which raised vast repercussions among us. The first occurred in the late eighteen nineties and early nineteen hundreds and emanated from the newly formed Disciples Divinity House at the University of Chicago. Its chief voice at the first was H. L. Willett, one of the charter members of the Campbell Institute.

It was inevitable that sooner or later the Disciples should be brought into the circle of this exciting quest, which in many ways resembled their own beginnings. It was also inevitable that they would display two reactions to it. Some would welcome it, recognizing in it a late nineteenth and early twentieth century parallel to what their early leaders had attempted to do in the early nineteenth century. Others would regard it with fear and hatred, believing that all major truth about the New Testament church had long ago been discovered and that only disaster could come from opening up problems they had long since regarded as settled and closed. J. W. McGarvey, then President of the College of the Bible at Lexington, Kentucky, was the leader of this dissenting group. Through a column in the **Christian Standard** he attacked it with all the bitterness and logic his pen could command.

It is one of the ironies of history that it was in the seminary where McGarvey had so long served that the second wave of excitement over this new technique should come. Here A. W. Fortune, E. E. Snoddy, and W. C. Bowers acquainted students with the new methods of Biblical study. The results were the same. Some welcomed the new techniques; others felt that all the solutions had already been found. Quite unwittingly their opponents played the same role in the twentieth century which the enemies

of Stone, the Campbells, and Scott had played almost one hundred years earlier.

The second force pushing our brotherhood into this new division was the rise of the ecumenical movement in Christendom. This movement was not unrelated to the new methods of biblical study, for reaction to these techniques and the findings brought about through them cut across denominational lines and made church leaders realize that the old divisions, while real and important, were in many instances less basic than this new conservative-progressive division in Christendom. Men of different denominations frequently found they had more in common with each other than they did with other men within their own historic church.

The Disciples had been born out of a passion for unity. It was inevitable they should be attracted by this new movement. Now, however, a latent issue became evident for those who had the eyes and the realism to see it. Which was the most important, the goal of unity or the technique of restoration? And even if the technique of restoration should prove to be once again the key to unity, was the New Testament church, which they were attempting to restore to be the one the Campbells felt they had rediscovered in the early nineteenth century, monolithic in the rigidity of structure and doctrine, or was in the church, diverse in polity and doctrine and unity only by its belief that God had revealed himself through Jesus Christ to save men, which contemporary examination of the New Testament was revealing?

Two factions again resulted. One said that restoration was our reason for existence and that the only unity possible was that obtained through conformation to the New Testament church the Campbells were sure they had found. The other admitted that upon re-examination the church of the New Testament seemed quite different from what the Campbells claimed it to have been. These felt, therefore, that unity was our main reason for being and that only the freedom of doctrine and of polity practiced in the New Testament churches and its principle of brotherly love, transcending all human definition of truth (even that of the Campbells) could bring unity to Christendom. To this they felt called to witness.

In the American scene, these two forces in Christendom were paralleled by a third force that made division inevitable. The frontier had passed, and American life was becoming more urbanized. Two world wars were to bring it into closer contact with the thought of other cultures than its own. Such urbanization and internationalization have usually led to two reactions. Some welcome the insights brought by such expanding horizons and seek to understand, appreciate, and influence the new culture growing therefrom. Others wish to retain the old values of the receding culture and seek to reject, combat, and withdraw from this new culture.

Among the Disciples of Christ, generally speaking, those who have seen restoration as the prime goal have adopted this latter attitude. It is only logical that they should do so, since it was this receding culture that created the framework out of which this type of restoration was born. In



atmosphere and size they seek to retain, even in the metropolitan centers, rural churches. In preaching they present the understandings of the past with monotonous repetition. They train their ministers in small unaccredited Bible schools largely out of touch with contemporary thinking. While they are willing to adopt some of the techniques of the culture of which they are a part, such as its means of mass communication and rapid transportation, they do not feel that that culture has any positive values to give to the church. Though Stone, the Campbells, and Scott had accepted the new Lockean psychology and the new Jeffersonian-Jacksonian concept of democracy as valuable aids in the reformation of the church, these self-appointed guardians of their insights reject the positive values which the new psychology and politico-economic thinking of our age might have to offer.

Among the Disciples of Christ, generally speaking, those who have seen Christian unity as the prime goal have welcomed the insights coming from the secular culture of which they are necessarily a part. They see an inter-related world means inter-relation in missions and in church relations. They see that urbanization is a fact. At least their more thoughtful members see that a rural church may offer consolation and peace of mind and a type of social security to its members but that it cannot confront its culture with a gospel that, while retaining its own essence unimpaired and without apology, will express itself in terms that will be understandable to that culture and will, therefore, be able to bring judgment on its sins and make strong its virtues and, above all, give meaning and therefore salvation to those whose lives are a part of it.

The Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) are by no means the only Christian body in America facing this division among its leaders and its membership. Every old-line denomination in America that is really coming to grips with this problem has either already experienced open rupture or has a division within it threatening rupture. The recent rumblings in the Southern Baptist Convention are only the latest proclamation that even a denomination that has thought of itself as thoroughly united is feeling this tension.

Because of our immersion in the rapid expansion that the so-called revival of religion in America has brought about, and because of our long-standing argument over independent or organized missions and the current discussion over open membership, the great danger to the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) today is that these sideshows may detract our attention from the real issues that are dividing us. The tensions over these lesser matters grow out of the main issue and are, therefore, important. They are, however, not the real issue, and need to be seen for what they are, concrete expressions of the main cause of tension. If a breach must come (and this author, for one, thinks it inevitable), we should see that it comes over the real issue, not over symptoms, and that all understand where the crux of the problem lies. Otherwise, we will have another division started before this breach has become clear. If it can be avoided (as some believe), let it be because we have found a principle large



enough to transcend a real division, not a panacea that will keep temporarily quiet the noise over agencies and over church polity.

It is for the purpose of encouraging its members in the scholarly study that makes issues such as these clear, of urging frank publication of their findings so that all may know the differing views, and of cultivating in them the deep Christian humility that can alone enable a group to survive such discussion that the Campbell Institute was called in to being and has continued to serve the brotherhood for over sixty years. It is to discuss fundamental issues in an atmosphere of frankness and sincerity but also of brotherly tolerance and understanding that the Campbell Institute has and will continue to hold its meetings.

Its present leaders hope to do this service to the brotherhood in four ways. In states where there are enough members, it is encouraging "midnight sessions" at state conventions, similar to the traditional ones held at the International Convention. These will discuss problems which are both too hot and as yet too little understood for the regular session. At certain well-known gatherings of ministers, such as the Hoover Lectures on Christian Unity at the Disciples Divinity House in Chicago and the Summer Conferences at the Union Theological Seminary in New York, it plans to gather ministers of the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) to listen to panels of their own members and to other leaders in the realm of theological education discuss the movements in world Christianity today. Through the pages of its quarterly, **The Scroll**, it will offer all an opportunity to publish their thoughts on any issue before us and to read what others of similar or radically different views may think. Through its traditional "midnight sessions" at the International Convention, it will create an opportunity for discussion on the above mentioned issues and any others which the ministers and the laymen of the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) wish to discuss. At the 1959 convention in Denver it will hold two sessions. They will be in a hotel parlor (to be announced at the convention) on the evenings of Monday, August 31st and Tuesday, September 1st. At the first, a panel of leaders will discuss "The Impact of Contemporary Theology on the Disciples of Christ". At the second, a panel will discuss "The Impact of Current Biblical Thinking on the Disciples of Christ". At both, following the presentation by the panel, the meeting will be thrown open for discussion from the floor.

In the words of the western movies and of T.V. shows, "The Campbell Institute rides again". Its enemies are the ones it has always fought: sectarianism, provincialism, and the willingness to hide differences under a blanket of the pretense that they do not exist. Its friends are the old ones it has proclaimed for years through the insignia on the front of **The Scroll**: Eleutheria, Aletheia — freedom, truth.

# THE IMPACT OF CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY ON THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

HOWARD E. SHORT

Editor of The Christian Evangelist-Front Rank

It's always a pleasure to say something in **The Scroll** because its style is so folksy and it stands in a class by itself. When writing for other journals which may come to mind, one has to be more careful lest the editor feel that what he produces is not compatible with the desired style.

Unless the president of our august organization, the Campbell Club, had agreed to let me write of my impressions on this theme just as I might speak about them in informal conversation, I should not have attempted to say anything. There are two chief reasons why I am not undertaking a scholarly research into this subject. The first is that space does not permit such a presentation. If you don't know what the second reason is I feel all the better about it.

First, I want to say that I doubt seriously whether contemporary theology has yet made any real impact upon Disciple thought. Here I am weighing carefully the word "impact." It sounds like a hard word. Road-builders have a tool they call an impactor and when it gets through impacting, the road-bed is solid. In this sense of the word, I don't think there is any solid influence of any one particular contemporary school of thought which can be said to have impressed itself upon Disciples sufficiently to alter their direction.

Without waiting any longer, I must repeat the trite phrase that the Disciples are not a theological people. A lot of us wince at that old saw nowadays. Sometimes we get out of it by saying that anyone who believes anything is a theologian. But I think we know what the saying meant. It meant that our insistence upon the use of common sense and rational philosophy as practiced by Alexander Campbell, in particular, and emphasized by many of our fellow-members in the twentieth century, militated against a set theological system. Some have said, of course, that this technique in itself is one kind of theological approach.

One of my colleagues used to say, "It's a lonely life," referring to his work as a professor of theology. Yet, this same person has told me that it has been one of the greatest pleasures of his life to have his field "recognized" by some of the brethren, at least, in the past decade.

Therefore, I would say, that the whole impact of theological talk and writing in the past quarter of a century has, at least, created enough excitement among Disciples to make it possible for a man to be a professor of theology in a theological seminary without apologizing for his chair.

Now I must turn to some impression of the influence (I shall use that word instead of the word "impact" for reasons stated above) of some of the various movements upon our people, as it appears to me. My second main point would be, therefore, that continental theology has certainly made its mark upon us. It is a little difficult to give it a name. Let me give a bit of personal history.

About 1932, near the end of my seminary days, a prominent scholar spoke favorably at chapel one day about Kierkegaard. He claimed familiarity with the man's writings and also seemed favorable to them.

A much more rash young man than myself made it a point, a few days later, to offer the speaker something written in German, for his criticism. The chapel speaker replied that he did not read German. Now this student told me that he knew that only one small reference from Kierkegaard had been translated into English at that time. I will say that he did not embarrass the professor by giving him this information.

What I am saying is that at that time, it had become fashionable for people to speak of their close acquaintance with Kierkegaard whether it was true or not. The flood-gates opened from that time on. Three new "B's", Barth, Brunner and Bultmann, took the place of the old musical "B's".

It's all very confusing, really. Today we speak quite glibly of existentialism. Reading backward from current definitions, we see that everyone is an existentialist. I would recommend highly the article by Richard S. Ford, "Existentialism: Philosophy or Theology?" in *Religion in Life*, summer, 1959, and also Roger L. Shinn's little book, *The Existentialist Posture*, (Association Press). If you want to understand where we all are, Disciples and all, in the face of this quarter-century of new impact, these two pieces of reading will orient you considerably.

But there is more than existential theory and philosophy in the influence of these continentals upon us. We don't talk very much now about form criticism and historical criticism, but certainly these two disciplines have left their mark upon practically every student of religion. Having been recently exposed more to the writing of fundamentalists and evangelicals than I was up until the present year, I have been surprised at the use they make of these disciplines.

We will have to say that the impact of continental thought in all its forms have been rather largely second-hand upon us. Perhaps it is a little too early for us to have contributed a recognized scholar to theological circles which use this language. We have several good men who know what they are doing, I have no doubt about that.

The reason I have mentioned this is that when a thing is second-hand, so to speak, its impact is always dissipated to some degree and very often, diverted in directions not entirely in keeping with the original system of thought. This is entirely in keeping with Disciple practice. One would hardly expect to find a "school of theology" among us.

The third chief thing I want to speak of is the influence of the self-named "evangelical" theology of our time. I have heard one of their foremost leaders speak more derisively of fundamentalists, in informal conversation, than I would be willing to do myself. The "gimmick" of these evangelicals is that they are Biblical scholars, first-rate theologians, using all the tools of the trade, leaving fundamentalists far behind, and yet they have come out at the opposite point of view from those whom they call the modernists or liberals.

It is difficult to assess what influence this thought has had upon our people, but I have a feeling that it has considerable effect upon those who feel better if they can cling to something which they consider old and dependable and more "true to the Book," under the aegis of scholarly study.

Having stated three general conclusions, I would like to record some of the random samples that have come to my mind, which formed the basis of the positions stated.

The last dozen sermons I have heard, some in local churches, some in conventions, leaned heavily to the program of the church, urging individuals to get into the activity more fully. There was a present note of urgency that seemed quite existential and a conviction that progress is possible which was quite in conflict with at least some neo-orthodoxy.

The language has crept in. One may sit in a group for hours and never know what the conversation is about, if he isn't hep to **kerygma**, **I-Thou**, **Qahal**, **space-time continuum**, **the leap of faith**, **existence**, **ecclesia**, **encounter**, the wandering people of God, and such.

There is nothing wrong with this procedure until a person starts using it to impress others (or himself), like the person mentioned earlier who wanted people to feel that he was well-acquainted with Kierkegaard. One meets individuals who know what they are talking about, those who think they know and those who know that they don't know but want to make an impression. Certainly the language of current biblical theology is used in the brotherhood.

There is considerable evidence that we are quick to pick up any evidence that a neo-orthodox theologian has confirmed a belief we already held. Witness the willingness of a journal to publish an article explaining Karl Barth's views on immersion as the New Testament baptism. Earlier memories of his views loosely called "modernism" by many of the readers, were buried under the resounding cheers for the new Barth.

Actually, it will take a generation to assess the import of current theology upon us. But a student could begin right now, reading sermon manuscripts, **Encounter** articles, convention resolutions and letters to the editor and find enough to satisfy any decent professor's demand for a term paper.



# "IF NOT NOW, WHEN?"<sup>1</sup>

LOREN R. FISHER

The Graduate Seminary - Phillips University

There have been many attempts in recent years to restudy or rethink the position of the Disciples of Christ.<sup>2</sup> This is an on-going process and we should constantly be at it. Not only should we rethink but we should allow the Gospel to judge us and reshape us. Over the years we have increased in size and our name is now well known, i.e. in most sections of this country. However, I am reminded of the teachings of Rabi Hillel who said,

A name made great is a name destroyed, and he that increases not decreases, and he that learns not is worthy of death . . .<sup>3</sup>

The use of the paradox may be current but not new! The teaching is certain; it is so easy to rest on our "good" name and refuse to advance.

The purpose of this paper is to briefly note the effect of current biblical studies on the thinking of Disciples — or would that be too brief? Perhaps we should change this statement to a question. What should be the effect of these studies on our thinking?

In the past we have talked a great deal about our witness to New Testament Christianity. This is still important, but we must be very careful that our witness is not to a set of "dated" interpretations of the New Testament. We do not always have to be novel, but our faith demands that we must be sound. Again, I want to refer to the Mishnah:

. . . there may be a new jar that is full of old wine and an old one in which is not even new wine.<sup>4</sup>

It is just possible that some of our old positions and especially our slogans might be **old and empty jars!**

Ideally, this study should probably include the influence of modern theology on Disciple thought. Especially since W. Pauck has used us as an example of a non-theological church.<sup>5</sup> However, space will not permit even a complete paper on biblical studies (Though I doubt if we can keep theology out!). Many fields of biblical studies will not be included, e.g. the very important Coptic texts from Nag Hammadi<sup>6</sup> or the recently published Akkadian texts from Ugarit.<sup>7</sup> In fact, I want to limit this discussion to the field of Dead Sea Studies. Even this is hardly a limitation, but we can draw some good examples from this material which will illustrate some very important results in current biblical studies for us — this time old wine in old jars!

Again allow me to quote from Rabbi Hillel:

If I am not for myself who is for me? and being for mine own self what am I? and if not now, when?<sup>8</sup>

I am not interested in being over-critical of the Disciples. In light of the above teaching, I would say that we must stand for what we believe, but we had better know what we believe and what we are! If we do not measure up in any real sense to the church of Jesus Christ, when will we? We had better look alive or many younger ministers will not be with us to answer this question.

The Dead Sea Scrolls are not an easy field of study. Too much has been written about them. One needs to read the scrolls. This presents a language difficulty, but if needed many of the non-biblical scrolls have been translated.<sup>9</sup> In addition two books can be highly recommended: Frank M. Cross, "The Ancient Library of Qumran" (Doubleday) and Krister Stendahl (ed.), "The Scrolls and the New Testament" (Harper).

## I. IS CHRISTIANITY UNIQUE?

It has been known for many years that the teachings of Jesus are not necessarily new to him. One may read some of the same teachings that Jesus used in the Mishnah. The previous quotes from the Mishnah are good illustrations of this fact. This does not detract from the teachings of Jesus; it makes them all the more real. Besides, Christianity is not based upon a new list of teachings, but rather on a new act of God in the Person of Christ.

The Dead Sea Scrolls furnish us with more material for biblical studies. The people of Qumran (the site near the Dead Sea where the people lived who hid the scrolls in the caves) also taught many of the same things that Jesus was teaching. It is not necessarily a question of borrowing but rather one of common backgrounds. For example, it would be a mistake to say that Matt. 5:5, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.", is unique (even in emphasis) with Jesus. It is not necessarily unique to the people of Qumran, but even as Jesus was interested in this thought from Ps. 37:11, so the people of Qumran were interested in it — as seen from their commentary on this psalm. This means that the teachings of Jesus were very real and quite contemporary.

However, the question is still before us. What is unique about Christianity? Many have tried to answer this question.<sup>10</sup> None have been too successful. Disciples who have emphasized "essentials" (incidentally, a bad change in the slogan which was "in Faith unity") should be interested at this point. What does the unique have to do with the "essentials"? or better the Faith? The relationship must be important, but it still remains unclear. There are many essential things in the New Testament that are held in common with the Old Testament, and with Rabbinic Judaism, e.g. a faith in Yahweh (unless we are hopelessly succumbed to our own brand of Marcionism!). At the same time the unique things can be very essential or maybe only historical accidents. The difficulty that is before us is increased because we have been speaking of "essential things."

Now, if we speak in personal terms the situation becomes clear. G. Florousky is right when he says, (referring to recent attempts to demythologize),

In fact, the modern plea is but a new form of that theological liberalism, which at least from the Age of the Enlightenment, persistently attempted to disentangle Christianity from its historical context and involvement to detect its perennial "essence" ("das Wesen des Christentums"), and to discard the historical shells.<sup>11</sup>

This does not mean that we do not need to understand history. Rather it means that history is "co-personal" and that we must understand persons and their events in context. A man does not just love the "essence" or the "unique" in his wife, and he is little more than beast if he only holds dear the things that she has in common with other women. He must relate himself to her existentially as a complete person — for better or worse. Now let us illustrate from Qumran.

The Manual of Discipline indicates that baptism was important to the people of Qumran. It was also important to John's ministry. However, this does not mean that Christian baptism was not different. The form may not be unique, but it is the person of Christ that gives it Christian meaning. What does this say to Disciples or any other Christian group? It does not say that form, symbol, or even myth are unimportant, for these carry meaning.<sup>12</sup> However, it does show us the importance of a correct emphasis.

The Lord's Supper is very important in the life and worship of the Disciples. Is the supper unique? After reading Karl Kuhn's article "The Meal"<sup>13</sup> in which he compares the meal of the Essenes at Qumran with that of the Christians, one sees that there are many things to rethink on this point. Kuhn does not carry the comparison too far. In fact he would say,

The analogy of the meals is no more conclusive than, e.g., that of the community of goods, practiced by both groups. In Palestinian Christianity, Jesus of Nazareth and the redemptive significance of his person is the creative element.<sup>14</sup>

This being the case it still does not diminish our interest in the details of the meal, and on the basis of Kuhn's article we would have to think seriously on the question of ever making it a meal with Passover meaning.

Thus we see that we are in as impossible position when we insist on too many unique things (or did both groups get the same blueprint?). Rather, we should insist on the importance of the Person of Christ who lived in a very real situation. Krister Stendahl says,

It is true to say that the Scrolls add to the background of Christianity, but they add so much that we arrive at a point where the significance of similarities definitely rescues Christianity from false claims of originality in the popular sense and leads us back to a new grasp of its true foundation in the person and the events of its Messiah.<sup>15</sup>

There are many more questions that could be asked at this point, e.g. what kind of church polity is really New Testament? Or in other words, why was the "twelve" so important to both groups? Or do we violate our progress thus far in asking these questions? I think not. Especially if we remember that our faith is personal. If Disciples are still interested in early Christianity they must face these questions, but if they are only interested in their conclusions of the past, the questions will have little interest (this means liberal as well as conservative conclusions!).

## II. THE BIRTH STORIES

Do we preach the birth stories of Matthew and Luke as a part of the early proclamation or *kerygma*? I suppose that many do not do this, but others do it in many ways without really thinking. We, as well as others, tie these stories together in a very clever way at Christmas time so that our children can spend a very difficult time in future years disentangling them. What have these stories in common? Only Jesus.

The Dead Sea Scrolls help us with this problem. For ages men have thought that somehow Matthew's birth account was connected with the Blessing of Balaam in Num. 24.<sup>16</sup> I, personally, was convinced of this, because Balaam was a "magi" of the East. In addition, in the Akkadian language the cuneiform sign for a god or a divine king would be the star. Thus, we have in Num. 24:17 "... a star shall come forth out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel; ... ." Matthew saw in this verse a messianic reference. But was he alone? From the Scrolls we have a Testimonia, i.e. a list of Old Testament passages which are understood by this congregation to be messianic.<sup>17</sup> Num. 24:15-17 is among these passages! The "star" and the "scepter" seem to refer to the priestly and the royal Messiahs which were expected at Qumran.<sup>18</sup> Now it may very well be that Matthew's interest in the "star of Jacob" stems from his desire to present Jesus as a priestly Messiah.<sup>19</sup> In fact, Matthew is interested in his book in presenting Jesus as a three-fold Messiah: a prophet like Moses (note the Sermon on the Mount), a king (in the line of David), and a priest. This is maintained elsewhere in the New Testament as well. Now, the Essenes of Qumran expected three separate persons. Therefore, it seems that Matthew presents Jesus as one who fulfills and combines these various expectations, and his birth story becomes very meaningful in light of his purpose. But we need to see this birth account from still another point of view.

Traditional Judaism had very little if any place or use for the Suffering Servant of God as seen in Deutero-Isaiah, but the people of Qumran thought of their teacher or perhaps of themselves (the One of God) as this servant.<sup>20</sup> The New Testament is still different because it seems to combine the vocation of the Suffering Servant with that of their three-fold Messiah. However, the early Christians were like the people of Qumran in that they were also in some way this servant, because they were expected to carry on and complete the mission of the Suffering Servant.<sup>21</sup> Now, in some places in the Old Testament (e.g. Micah 4:6-10 or Is. 66:7-9) the figure of the servant is changed to that of a pregnant one who must suffer.



In a very interesting hymn from Qumran the congregation — perhaps in the person of their teacher — is compared to a “woman in travail.”<sup>22</sup> It seems that through the struggles and hardships of “preparing the way” this congregation will give birth to the “Wonderful Counsellor.” The Daughter of Zion even the Virgin of Israel brings forth the Messiah!<sup>23</sup> But, these thoughts should not be strange to the Christian. Rev. 12 pictures the church in the same role. W. H. Brownlee also points out that Paul is thinking in this way when he says in Gal. 4:19, “My little children, with whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you!”<sup>24</sup> It is the church that must bring forth Christ. Again, Brownlee must be given credit in his excellent article for relating this to John 16:21,22 (however, he follows John Chamberlain in this). In this passage sorrow will turn to joy for “a **man** (**anthropos**) is born into the world.” The use of **man** here is messianic and refers to the resurrected Christ, and the church must continue to bring Him forth! This then is a very symbolic birth story and the Scrolls have helped us to see it. It really comes as no surprise because Luke represents Jesus’ baptism as well as his resurrection as a fulfilment of Ps. 2:7, “. . . You are my son, today I have begotten you.”<sup>25</sup> Thus, the birth of the Messiah is extremely important to the mission of the church — in fact it is its mission! This is an additional reason for viewing Matthew’s account as symbolic and full of messianic meaning. If we are interested in the details of the birth of Jesus we must look to Luke, but even this is suspect. Luke relates his account so very close in form and content to the birth of Samuel that one wonders if Luke is in this way interested in the composite character of Samuel who was at least a prophet, priest, and judge!

I think that all Christians want to know the real meaning of the Bible, but that is just the problem — what is the real meaning? For instance, what do the words “forty years” mean in the Bible? Most now realize that here we are usually dealing with a “generation.” In the same way some of us have used the birth stories as tests of fellowship — detailed narratives! Others have not seen their importance for Christology and Messianic birth by the church as she completes what remains of His suffering and mission.

### III. METHODS OF OLD TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION

The Disciples have usually been Neo-Marcionite in their views of the Old Testament. In fact the term New Testament Christianity is rather confusing. It was not the New Testament that made them Christians but it was Christ. The New Testament was not their book, they produced it. The Old Testament was for both the Essenes and the early Christians their most important book. They were saturated with its content and thought forms. To study the law seemed to be the highest good. These two groups did not see in the Old Testament a different God, a different purpose, or a different love. From our point of view both groups misunderstood the Old Testament in many places, but no more than it is misunderstood today. In fact the Testimonia, where we see passages of scripture isolated from their context, would remind us to be patient with New Testament writers when they use a passage out of context, because in many cases that is probably the way they viewed it. After a study of the

Commentaries of Qumran in which almost every verse of scripture is applied to their own times the New Testament writers seem to have restrained themselves rather well. Incidentally, several things such as Paul's predestination (or is that a bad word?) seem a bit different when viewed in light of the extremist at Qumran. However, I am not overlooking their inconsistency in this matter nor Paul's — after all they were persons and not systems!

The use of the Old Testament and other apocryphal works reminds us that the theological thought forms of the first century were rather consistent and Hebraic. Even the language of John's Gospel seems to fit this pattern. *Logos* seems to be losing its Hellenistic significance. The Hebraic sense of **Word**, implying **act** or **event**, is now seen as very important. The Suffering Servant concept that we have discussed above is another thought form that is instrumental in the entire ministry of Paul. He even takes his missionary commission from the second Servant Song as seen in Acts 13:47. Thus a better understanding of Old Testament thought is imperative, because the New Testament writers lived and breathed it.

From the biblical texts found at Qumran we have information that is a great value in the study of various textual traditions. Also, some texts reveal a rather popular character, and others have been copied by rather careless scribes. It seems that by the time of Qumran the canon was well established (though not officially) and little time is left for Maccabean Psalms as was once thought. These are only a few of the reasons why the Scrolls are so important for the Old Testament.

Once again, what does this have to do with us? Must we also look at the Old Testament and see the events of our own times? For them the prophets were always speaking eschatologically, and they were living in the last days. No, we do not have to think in these terms, but it does help us to understand the situation that the early church had such a difficult time in overcoming. Namely, that the end was soon to come. This should remind Disciples that the early church grew in many ways and all was not delivered in perfect form at Pentecost. The response of the early Christians to Christ is very important, but so is the improved response important which is ever on-going.

## CONCLUSION

We have left many things unsaid, but these are a few examples of how one area of biblical studies is contributing to important understandings. It seems like Disciples must be interested if they are alive? We must advance; we must invest. However, I do not necessarily mean in bigger and better programs. We must have the courage to suffer even the agonizing task of rethinking if we are to present Christ to our world. All must participate. Again let me quote from Rabbi Hillel:

. . . Say not, when I have leisure I will study; perchance thou wilt never have leisure.<sup>26</sup>

Jesus was always very urgent in his demands. If something was worth doing it was worth doing now. If not now, **never!**

## NOTES

1. Aboth, 1:14 (These Mishnaic quotes are all according to Danby's trans.).
2. Note William Robinson, **Churches of Christ (Disciples) and the Ecumenical Age** (The Berean Press) and also the article by Langdon Gilkey, "The Imperative for Unity; A Re-statement" in **Issues In Unity** (The Council on Christian Unity).
3. Aboth 1:13
4. Aboth 4:20
5. W. Pauck, "Theology in the Life of Contemporary American Protestantism" **Religion and Culture**, ed. by Walter Leibrecht (New York, Harpers, 1959.)
6. The best place to get a start on these studies is probably in a book ed. by F. L. Cross, **The Jung Codex**, Three studies by H. C. Puech, G. Quispel, and W. C. van Unnik, (London, A. R. Mowbray, 1955).
7. See my article "An Amarna Age Prodigal" **Journal of Semitic Studies**, April, 1958, where an illustration is given of their importance.
8. Aboth 1:14
9. See T. H. Gaster, **The Dead Sea Scriptures in English Translation**, (Garden City, Doubleday, 1956) and Millar Burrows, **The Dead Sea Scrolls and More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls**, both (New York, The Viking Press, 1955 and 1958.).
10. William A. Beardslee, "Identifying the Distinctive Features of Early Christianity" **A Stubborn Faith** ed. by E. C. Hobbs (Dallas, SMU Press, 1956). He reviews the views of Harnack, Nygren, Cullmann, and Bultmann.
11. Georges Florovsky, "The Predicament of the Christian Historian", Walter Leibrecht, *op. cit.*
12. Amos Wilder, "Scholars, Theologians, and Ancient Rhetoric" **Journal of Biblical Literature**, March, 1956, page 9, note "Poetic truth is inseparable from poetic form."
13. Karl G. Kuhn, "The Lord's Supper and the Communal Meal at Qumran", **The Scrolls and the New Testament**, ed. by Krister Stendahl (New York, Harpers, 1957).
14. *Ibid.*, p. 86.
15. Krister Stendahl, "The Scrolls and the New Testament: An Introduction and a Perspective" ed. by Krister Stendahl, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
16. Krister Stendahl, **The School of St. Matthew**, (Uppsala, Almqvist & Wiksells, 1954), p. 136.
17. J. M. Allegro, "Further Messianic References in Qumran" **Journal of Biblical Literature**, p. 183f.
18. Frank M. Cross, Jr., **The Ancient Library of Qumran** (Garden City, Doubleday, 1958), p. 112.
19. I have a detailed paper on this that is forthcoming.
20. W. H. Brownlee "Messianic Motifs of Qumran and the New Testament", **New Testament Studies**, Nov., 1956. He has written a great deal on this subject. He is right when he equates the teacher with the servant, but this still doesn't make the teacher a Messiah.
21. This needs a fuller treatment, but a great deal has been written.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 23f.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 24, note 2, "In Matthew and Luke the application of the prophecy is changed from the corporate Virgin Israel to the personal Virgin of Israel — The latter being regarded as representative of the former."
24. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
25. Luke 3:22 (and note other texts) and Acts 13:33.
26. Aboth 2:5.

# BAPTISM, CONGREGATIONAL AUTONOMY, AND THE UNITED CHURCH

WILLIAM C. HOWLAND, JR.,  
First Christian Church, Fort Smith, Arkansas

This paper is not intended to replace or to supersede the paper prepared by Dean Blakemore and included in your Study Document. It is rather the intention here to supplement and enlarge upon some of the issues which Dean Blakemore includes and to raise some issues with which he does not deal.

The paper professes to be neither original nor complete but consists of a compendium of some of the thinking and writing being done in this field. It does not seek so much to answer questions as to raise them. It assumes that the nature of the unity we seek is some organic relationship to sister denominations.

— I —

The first specific issue to which we shall refer, an issue that would affect not only our relationship to the United Church of Christ but our union with half of Protestantism, is the question of Baptism.

The **Basis of Union for the United Church of Christ** reads: "All persons who are members of either communion at the time of the union shall be members of the United Church. Men, women and, children shall be admitted into the fellowship of the United Church through baptism and profession of faith according to the custom and usage of each congregation prior to the union. When they shall have been admitted they shall be recognized as members of the United Church."<sup>1</sup>

As Disciples of Christ this immediately faces us with three problems in relationship to Baptism: 1) For want of a better term "believer's baptism" as opposed to "infant baptism," 2) The mode of baptism by immersion as opposed to sprinkling, 3) The definition of baptism as a symbol or a sacrament.

Someone has written that "the effort to understand the meaning of unity has brought all of our evidence of disunity under judgment," and this is certainly pertinent at the point of baptism. Differences at the point of the concept and practice of Christian baptism presents one of the really stubborn problems of our disunity and requires a constructive adjustment, if not a change of understanding and practice, as a prerequisite to an inclusive unity in Protestantism.

The problem which baptism presents to a united church arises from the fact that the divergent opinions concerning it lead to separatist and exclusive practices that divide and keep us apart. Almost without exception some form of baptism is required for admission to the church. This is statedly true of the newly formed United Church of Christ. However,



within the universal agreement that baptism is not only an acceptable but a commendable practice there is the sharpest of disagreement as to what is properly to be called and considered Christian baptism.

The most fundamental issue at stake here is that of the question of "believer's baptism" versus "infant baptism." Disciples and Baptists, and some other groups have long defended believer's baptism and have vigorously opposed any ceremony for infants which bears the name or meaning of baptism. On the other hand both the Congregationalists and the Evangelical and Reformed churches along with a great portion of Protestantism have contended that infant baptism is not only meet and right, but that its practice involves and symbolizes a very important aspect of the life of the Christian community which is easily overlooked and lost if such a practice is not followed.

In years past the Reformed theologians have agreed with the Roman Catholic and Lutheran bodies in the practice and defense of infant baptism. Today there is within their ranks a heated discussion taking place over this very practice. It has been said that the only point upon which Barth and Brunner completely agree is in the rejection of infant baptism as a valid practice within the life of the church. Barth does not ask for rebaptism as in Anabaptist days, but instead of "infant baptism", a baptism which on the part of the baptized is a responsible act." Emil Brunner goes so far as to say, "The contemporary practice of infant baptism can hardly be regarded anything short of scandalous." In response to Barth and Brunner a new defense of the practice of infant baptism has come from two of the most distinguished Continental New Testament scholars of our day, Jeremias of Gottingen, and Oscar Cullman of Basel.<sup>2</sup>

Disciples of Christ since the days of Alexander Campbell have rejected infant baptism as a valid practice. The arguments in defense of this position have been many. There has been the practical argument raised by the simple scrutiny of the obvious fact that there is real reason for questioning a practice that finds millions of persons who were once baptized as infants, who now as adults have no active relationship to the church. Baptism was something that happened to them as children without their consent or seeking. As adults their lives correspond in no visible way to the inherent meaning and obligation of their baptism. The number in this category is largest where there is a state church. Still we are very much aware of it as a part of the phenomena of the contemporary scene of church life in our own country. At the same time, there are few who would argue that our skirts are completely clean at this point for there have been innumerable cases in which individuals who have experienced "believer's baptism" have to state it colloquially "strayed from the fold!"

Too, the Disciples being a New Testament people and resting their authority for faith and practice in the Scriptures find no foundation for this practice there. Nowhere in the New Testament is there any specific mention of infant baptism as such. It may be correct that the word "hinder" in the verse "Let the children come unto me and do not hinder them", may have acquired a technical definition and use in the early church in

relation to the baptizing of infants, as Cullman argues. Yet there is not conclusive evidence that Jesus meant by the opposite of "hindering" children the "baptizing" of them. True, some of the households mentioned in the New Testament which received baptism may have included infants or small children, but we are never told explicitly this is true. An appeal to these incidents as a New Testament basis for the practice of infant baptism finds itself on pretty shaky ground.

A third factor dear to the heart of Disciples has been the relationship of faith to baptism. We have reasoned that if we are saved by faith and that baptism is related to the process of salvation, that faith then must be a prerequisite for receiving baptism. To ascribe to a month old infant some kind of personal faith is to make a reckless use of that word. Where does faith play its part in infant baptism we ask? To say that the faith of some one else, the parents, the congregation, the Church, or Christ himself, is substituted for that of the child is to make a mockery of our understanding of faith and spiritual religion. Again, however, we in our practice of the baptism of children from the ages of seven to twelve under the guise of "believer's baptism" have opened ourselves to something of the same criticism and attack.

The United Church of Christ, however, feels that there is ample basis for the community of the church practicing the baptism of infants. Their basic arguments involve this understanding. Baptism is the rite of entrance into the "People of God." The development of infant baptism arose from men attempting to think through implications of the rite of entrance into the community of the church. Ultimately the Jewish precedent was followed. In each case an adult was not received into the holy community until a person had shown his desire that this should be done through an expression of his own faith. But the children of parents who belonged to the holy community, it was reasoned, should be received at once with the expectation that through the experience of being related to the holy community and receiving instruction, and devout living in a household of faith, faith would follow. It is quite true that this concept did not develop specifically out of any New Testament example. It was, however, the logical development of the meaning of baptism as reception into the "People of God." While later aspects have crept into the practice which are unfortunate, nevertheless, it was founded on a true insight into the community of God. We are not related nor do we solely live in the household of God as isolated individuals, but in the context of families which God has ordained and established.

Baptism, the argument runs, symbolizes a call of God to his people to be his own. Just as male Hebrews were circumcised at birth to represent their initiation into God's chosen people, so all infants, born of parents who have subscribed to the new covenant, should be given the Christian successor to circumcision, baptism. Naturally the infants cannot understand the death-and-resurrection significance of baptism; but their parents should, and in training their children they should make it possible for them to live in the light and the spirit of this truth rather than in a sense of bondage to death. The children are a part of God's true community and

should be able to know this even before they take the church membership vows that confirm their relationship to the community.<sup>3</sup>

Baptism symbolizes the giving of the Holy Spirit. But it does more than symbolize. It actually imparts the spirit. And here we come face to face with the "symbol" versus "sacrament" views. To neglect baptism is to neglect a means of grace that God has used effectively and mightily. To deny baptism to infants in Christian homes is to deny them access to this means of grace. If God so loves us as to give us baptism, why should we withhold from the children of believers this expression of His love.

In baptism God has uniquely provided a way for the church of the new covenant to signify openly what God does personally and privately when he calls a person to belong to him in Christ. Baptism is a ready witness that the individual is called into the community of believers. Baptism becomes a means for the right ordering of God's church, for by it we can signify who is in the church.<sup>4</sup>

Who is to say how and when the Spirit calls a person into his church? Would it not seem a restriction on the Spirit to require that baptism be administered only after a certain age has been reached? It would seem more in the spirit of grace to baptize all infants of believing parents, and perhaps to err occasionally, than to postpone this rite and deny its benefits to those infants and small children who are under the Spirit's call.

"In defending the validity of infant baptism we seek to recognize the great truth of the gospel that God's loving grace always precedes our turning to him. Our faith is always a response to the antecedent grace of God. It is going too far to say that only infant baptism conserves this truth. A Baptist may likewise recognize that it is not his faith which has earned the divine gift. But when an infant child receives the sacrament of divine love, it is a vivid demonstration that the gift has not come through any merit but is a free bestowal of grace. Activist Americans need this reminder that the action of God always comes first. All that we can possibly do is to respond to what God has done for us in Christ."<sup>5</sup>

Gustaf Aulen has written in this regard, "The Baptism of infants shows us how our membership in the Church has its basis not in our own endeavors and efforts, but solely in the divine love and grace, and therefore, also how this membership is quite independent of human judgments and decisions . . . For the justification of infant baptism it is not necessary to refer to isolated incidents in the New Testament. The justification has its foundation in the Gospel itself as the Gospel of the free and undeserved grace of God. This Gospel and the baptism of infants belong together."<sup>6</sup>

From the Oberlin Report came this statement, "The distinctive mark of those whose traditions include infant baptism is that baptism is the outward sign and seal that the child has now entered into the fellowship of the covenant people and/or the means of grace whereby the child is grafted into the Body of Christ. The significance of baptism is not to be found immediately in anything done by the child."<sup>7</sup>



This then is but a part of the "believers" versus "infant" baptism conflict which we as Disciples cannot ignore.

We cannot, however, stop here. A second major area of controversy involves the mode of baptism. Baptism, we have said, is the corporate action of the church by which it receives new members into its fellowship. In a large segment of Protestantism the manner of administering baptism is optional. We as Disciples have practiced only baptism by "immersion."

There is general agreement that the Greek word "baptizo" means literally to "dip repeatedly." Still there are some passages where it can be interpreted to mean only "wash" in a general sense and cannot possibly require a complete immersion. (Mark 7:3,4; Luke 11:38; Acts 16:33) While this is true there is not much question that in the earliest days of the church the form of baptism was that of immersion. Surely this is presupposed in Romans 6:34 when Paul declares, "do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death." "If dying and rising with Christ" is the only symbolism to be seen in baptism, there can be no question that total immersion expresses this more aptly than any other mode. However there are other images related to baptism such as "new birth" which are not so easily identified with nor symbolized by immersion.

There are those who claim that immersion was not insisted upon very long in the early church, if this was ever the case. The earliest specific description which we discover related to the mode of baptism is that in the Didache, ascertained to be an early second-century document. This manual of the early church directs that the church should baptize "in running water; but if thou hast no running water, baptize in other water, and if thou canst not in cold, then in warm. But if thou hast neither, pour water three times on the head. (7:1-3)" This seems to be evidence that no specific mode of baptism was compulsory. A supplementary confirmation of this argument comes from the fact that the earliest baptistries unearthed by archeologists were not deep enough to permit the total immersion of adults.<sup>8</sup>

Some Disciples and Baptists have another defense for total immersion. They appeal to the words which Matthew ascribes to Jesus when he insists that John should baptize him. "Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." (Matthew 3:15). They underscore the word **thus** and conclude it to mean that Jesus was suggesting that a particular mode of Baptism, immersion, was necessary if one was to fulfill all righteousness and be validly baptized. Such contentions, argue others, are hardly worthy of refutation. For them the righteousness of God is not fulfilled by adhering to an arbitrary form of baptism. Obviously the word "thus", they contend, refers to the necessity which Jesus felt to come to John's baptism, not to a particular mode or form of administering that baptism. Jesus, they feel, would have come as readily had John been sprinkling or pouring.

The fundamental fact of faith in regard to baptism is the act of transformation that can be accomplished. To identify any particular pattern



or mode as the only mark of true baptism is to substitute an outer form for an inner reality. It is to establish a legalism in relation to that which is the prime activity of God's grace and spirit.

A third aspect which we simply mention here is whether baptism is to be understood as a sacrament or a symbol. The Disciples' position has always been nearer that of the view of symbol. Our affinity here would be closer to the Congregational tradition than to that of the Evangelical and Reformed.

At the point of the Disciples and immersion, C. C. Morrison has some interesting comments to make. Having discussed the adamant stand of the Episcopal Churches' attitude toward apostolic succession and the historical episcopate, he concludes by saying that the Episcopalians feel they are guarding this particular practice and tradition for the church. While in one sense they recognize the ordination of other groups, in another sense, they feel a divine responsibility to keep the succession pure for the church.

He goes on to draw this analogy. "The immersionist denominations are in much the same position as the Episcopal Church in respect to the historic episcopate. The analogy is precise. The immersionist bodies — Baptists, Disciples and numerous others — have traditionally thought of themselves as holding in trust for the whole church the practice of immersion, as the Episcopalians similarly feel that they hold in trust the whole church their historic Episcopate . . .

The analogy extends even further. The rest of Protestantism reacts to the special acclaim of each of these groups in an identical manner. It regards each with virtual indifference. The rest of Protestantism (including the Episcopalians) regards the immersionist claim as an unwarranted inference from the New Testament writings and spurns with repugnance the idea that Christ commanded the physical act of immersion in water as a condition of fellowship in his church. Likewise, the rest of Protestantism (including Baptists, Disciples and other immersionists) holds the historic episcopate and the concept of apostolic succession as a nonessential, though venerable, institution and considers its own manner of ordination as fully valid."<sup>9</sup>

This further word from Morrison is included to stimulate your thinking. He says, "The Disciples originated as, in a true sense, an ecumenical movement. But their thinking later congealed into a sectarian pattern of the New Testament church which must be restored as the true basis of a united church. The exclusive practice of immersion became, not necessarily the most important, but certainly the most conspicuous feature of this pattern church . . . (Consequently), Instead of being a movement for church union they became one of the major problems to its attainment."<sup>10</sup>

He goes on to report, however, there is a new resurgence of the original Disciple zeal for unity. "With respect to immersion baptism, Disciples churches in increasing numbers are accepting unimmersed mem-

bers of other churches without rebaptism. The motive for this is not proselytism, but the desire to 'practice Christian union' within their own fellowship without pressing their exclusive practice of immersion to the point of sectarian dogma."

The question is this, can we find that essential freedom within a united church that will allow for differing attitudes toward baptism? Can we agree that there must be a freedom regarding the mode of baptism and as wide a latitude in the interpretation of baptism as exists within the New Testament itself? Can we acknowledge that it is God who acts in baptism, and that he does not restrict his blessing to one mode or to one exclusive interpretation? For we as Disciples, as we seek to discover our place in the Ecumenical Church and as we consider union with other denominations, this is one issue which we cannot ignore. It requires our most thoughtful and prayerful reconsideration.

## — II —

A second issue which along with baptism seems to me to be crucial in our consideration of union with the United Church of Christ, and an issue which Dean Blakemore refers to in his paper, is that of the form a United Church will take in terms of polity and structure.

Granted that the Church must have some form if it is to be a definable body, what should that form be? Is it determined by the course of historical development and, therefore, subject to change under new circumstance, or has God in his wisdom decreed one necessary form which is an essential mark of the Church?

For instance the Presbyterians are wedded to presbyteries, Methodists affirm the desirability of episcopal supervision; the Disciples of Christ have held out for the independency of a congregational type structure. The Anglo-Catholic group hold to the necessity of the episcopacy because that office is understood by them to involve apostolic succession. And out of this malaise of structures, we are faced with two mutually exclusive positions which claim the sole validity for the particular form of the church — the freer Protestant churches versus the Anglo-Catholic tradition.

To make this more concrete by illustration, both Southern Baptists and the Anglo-Catholics are saying that all others should surrender to the truth as they see it. The only alternative for either of them, according to their own opinion, would be disloyalty to the gospel; and no Christian can in good conscience ask for that. God wills unity; of this they are sure. However, they are equally sure that God wills unity according to their form and structure. The rest of us drift somewhere to and fro on the misty flats in between these two extremes.

The Basis for Union of the United Church provides for Conferences, Associations, and Synods beyond the local congregation, these groupings having some authority resident within each division, established to conduct their business in their own way. The basic unit of the organization is the congregation, the local church. The government of the United church

is exercised through Congregations, Associations, Conferences, and the General Synod in such wise that the autonomy of each is respected in its own sphere, each having its own rights and responsibilities in principle. The constitution which will be drafted after the consummation of the union shall further define them but shall in no wise abridge the rights now enjoyed by congregations.

The question is where does this leave us, the Disciples of Christ? While, in practice we have not adhered to it, we have held the theory that regards the local church as invested with complete independence and autonomy, and have rejected every form of connexionalism which involves any ecclesiastical bond or union between local congregations and the church as a whole.

Our position along with other congregationally formed groups has rested on the conviction "1) that the New Testament knows no other empirical church except the local congregation. 2) that these congregations were independent and autonomous, there being no organized or recognized churchly interdependence among them. 3) that the emergence of organization (assumed to be sometime after the New Testament period) represented an apostasy from the order established at the beginning, and 4) that this New Testament pattern is normative and mandatory upon the church for all time".<sup>12</sup>

Recent investigations in the field of Biblical study and scholarship have all but blasted our balloon of dependence upon the New Testament as a proof text for our form of church polity. The fact is that according to the New Testament itself, the individual congregations were not entirely independent. True, there was no formal organization into diocese or presbytery or denomination. There was no one pattern of integration by which their unity found expression. Yet at two points, as pointed out by Clarence Tucker Craig, there were distinct limitations upon the autonomy of the local church. These lay in the authority of the apostles and the primacy which was exercised by the church at Jerusalem. In the case of the apostles, it was the personal and moral authority of these who alone could bear firsthand witness to the revelation of God in Christ Jesus. In the case of the Jerusalem church, it was a parental solicitude for the churches to which it had given birth and which recognized in love the mother's right to guide her own children. The point here, however, is not as to the kind of authority that was exercised but the fact that it was recognized by the local congregations.<sup>13</sup>

That is to say, even in the earliest period of Christianity, no local church claimed independence and autonomy. Such a claim would have been repugnant to the churches themselves. They had as yet no ecclesiastical organs through which to express their interdependence and unity, but they were one church, the veritable body of Christ, and were being guided by the Holy Spirit to the attainment of a structure through which their unity could be given empirical manifestation and guarded against division into multitudinous anarchy. In a word, the church was ecumenical from the beginning.



Returning to the congregational idea, whether we are willing to admit it or not, we so-called congregational denominations which are hopeful of possible inclusion in the ecumenical movement, are only theoretically committed to this principle. In actual practice we are not truly congregational, we have an organized unity of local churches for which there is no specific pattern in the primitive church. The body that comes nearest, according to Morrison, to the actual practice of the independence and autonomy of the local church is the Churches of Christ — our own abortive child. They live in their shell under the illusion that they have actually restored the primitive church, and they are antagonistically indifferent to the ecumenical movement. The fact is that those of us who claim congregationalism differ from the connexional denominations only in degree despite our loud protest and rabid defense to the contrary.

Look at our own church for instance. We transact our denominational affairs in great popular mass meetings of our members who attend as individuals, though, in each case an informal gesture is made toward the idea that each person "represents" his local church. Several years ago we supplemented our mass convention with the Committee on Resolutions consisting of more than two hundred persons appointed on a proportional basis by the state conventions. This committee sits continuously throughout the entire period of the convention. To it all reports of agencies, all resolutions and matters of business are referred and brought back to the main convention with recommendations. You see at this point, for just one example, we Disciples have substantially modified the extreme congregationalism to which we do homage. Our state conventions too, have come to some degree to be responsible intermediaries between the churches and the Brotherhood. Even our long time practice of ordination by one local church is coming to be seen as a usurpation of a function which rightly belongs to the church as a whole.

And whether we want to admit it or not — all of this is a far cry from the infant church of the New Testament which "radical congregationalism" theoretically claims to "restore". Still, however, let us be careful to recognize that it is equally a far cry from those denominations which frankly avow the principle that every local church is an organic part of the whole church, with responsibilities which transcend its independence and autonomy. But let us repeat. The difference between the two is a matter of degree and of order and of true democracy, rather than sacred principle.

At this point, it might be well to say that for a long time the Congregationalists have been the lest congregational in the congregational group. Their associations have been recognized by local churches as having a legitimate interest in the ordination of a minister, in calling him to a parish church and installing him in it. Their General Council has been fairly representative of the association and local churches. Consequently, the step into the form of government and structure of the United Church is not near as long a step as it would be for Disciples.

Again I want to quote from C. C. Morrison as a stimulus to our thinking for it is so contrary to what we as Disciples have theoretically held. He



says "As for the claim as to which is the more democratic, the congregational or the connexional, the advantage would seem to lie with the connexional. The difference between them in actual practice is one of degree instead of principle. That is to say, in one group the democratic process is provided with more orderly and dependable procedures than in the other. This difference appears in the ecclesiastical functioning of the denomination as a whole. Both types of denominations have the same kind of agencies — missionary, educational, evangelistic, philanthropic, public relations, ministerial pensions, social action and the rest. These agencies are functions of the unity of the denomination. They represent the interdependent integration of its local churches.

One would expect, in the case of the denomination which makes high claim for the autonomy and the independence of the local church, that its local churches would desire and assert their democratic right to participate effectively in directing the operations of these agencies. It does not appear that they have such a desire. At any rate, they allow a great mass meeting, consisting of those members of their churches who wish to attend (and who usually pay their own expense), to hear reports of the agencies and approve decisions made by ad hoc committees or by the agencies themselves. Only a small fraction of the local churches are "represented" in these mass meetings which are always overloaded by those from the churches in the immediate region where the convention is held. This loose and relatively irresponsible procedure is the basis on which the claim of superior democracy is made. But it is not truly democratic. It results inevitably in the concentration of responsibility in the hands of those who are interested in exercising it. Not infrequently, this has resulted in the virtual control of the policies of the whole denomination by an elite group . . .

To claim that its churches are free in such a system is an affront to democratic intelligence. They can be truly free only in a system in which the delegated or representative principle inherent in democracy is provided by a polity that evokes from the grass roots of the local churches their advice and consent. This the denominations of the connexionalist type grant to their local churches in an orderly procedure through presbyteries and synods (the particular name is immaterial) in which each local church is represented. For this reason, it must be claimed on behalf of the Presbyterians, Lutherans, Episcopalians and Methodists that they are more democratic than their congregational neighbors."<sup>14</sup>

What form a united church should take we must discover. Whether the United Church of Christ is the direction we must decide. But it is obvious, I think to everyone, that a united church, emerging from the dissolution of the churchism of the denominations, must itself assume a structure or form all its own. It need not and should not be an elaborate form. But it should provide those orderly procedures that will enable the church to enjoy an integrated ecclesiastical fellowship and to act as a whole in those matters which are the true functions of the whole church. That this is possible without restricting local autonomy in these matters which are the true functions of the local congregation is universally recognized. But all parts of the church must be integrated on the broad principle of their

transcendent obligation to the whole church. It is quite unthinkable that any part of the church should set itself up as absolutely independent and autonomous. Least of all could local congregations so consider themselves. Nor can the whole church consider itself superior to or independent of the local churches.

We must search and we must find an acceptable and adequate structure for the church. An appeal for radical independency from the basis of the biblical practice itself is no longer adequate. To believe that the Bible contains what is essential for salvation does not carry with it the corollary that the forms of the organization it presupposes are immutable.

A static biblicism which is unresponsive to new needs and does not recognize a continuing guidance by the Holy Spirit is an enslaving chain which we have no right to wear. God did not die and then bequeath a book containing a permanent and unchangeable charter for his Church. What is appropriate for a child is not necessarily adequate for an adolescent or adult. So likewise, the forms which were appropriate for the first generation of believers are not necessarily adequate for all time. Even though there were no limitations upon congregational independency in New Testament times, it would not follow that the church was unjustified in developing them later.

No church should be so wedded to its present forms that it cannot make concessions to those who come from other backgrounds. Some sacrifices must be made for the greater good the effective realization of the one Church of God.

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# CIMADE AT WORK IN MARSEILLE

By WILLIAM J. NOTTINGHAM

The world-famous Michelin tourist guide introduces Marseille with the following description: "Twenty-five centuries make Marseille the oldest of French's big cities. Today it is second in population. Admirably situated in a great bay surrounded by limestone bluffs, it is singularly appealing with its animation and gaiety overflowing throughout the downtown area, especially along the famous Canebiere and around the Old Port.

"First among the seaports of France, it owes everything to the Mediterranean, which extends along the beautiful drive around the Corniche and which can be admired not only from the heights of Notre Dame de la Garde but from the city, itself, preferably at sunset. Marseille is also a great industrial center featuring oil refineries, soap factories, flour and cereal production, and steel mills.

"The creation of new port facilities and the development of the Rhone River, the Berre basin and the oil port of Lavera, the importance of which grows with the arrival of oil from Africa, will make Marseille one of the foremost European ports."

The character of this exceptional city is further depicted with a special warning to the tourist to drive with extreme caution. Traffic, reflecting the temperament and spirit of the population, is described as "intense" and "disconcerting" . . . to say the least!

Six hundred years before Christ, Phocian adventurers landed here. Greek merchants brought prosperity. Rome stretched the mantle of authority and protection over the little city-state. Skin-divers of the 20th century have found the remains of those ancient times off the coast.

European history can be traced through its annals from the rivalry of Caesar and Pompey to the Nazi occupation, from the Crusades and the Black Death to visits of the Forrestal and the arrival of Moslems from war-torn Algeria. The presence of the fez and burnoose in the colorful crowds is, in fact, the reason for the presence of CIMADE — ecumenical service organization of the French churches — in Marseille. Crossroads of Europe, Africa, and the Near East since time immemorial, Marseille represents an acute social problem today in view of French-Algerian relations and challenges the Church of Jesus Christ to justify its long association with European civilization. About 12,000 North African laborers are employed in the vicinity of Marseille, and between 1500 and 2000 families live in the tenements along Rue d'Aix or in one of the numerous shantytowns stuck in odd corners throughout the city and called *bidonvilles* by the French. A *bidon* is a large tin can. Another 17,000 are estimated to be in transit through Marseille, and the number arriving and departing for North Africa each month is from three to four thousand. Forty percent cannot speak French, the vast majority are illiterate even in Arabic, and they are all suspects of terrorism in the eyes of the police who patrol in

pairs or groups of three and are prompt to look into every commotion or assembly on the streets.

True to its spirit and method, CIMADE is interested in the disinherited regardless of race, religion, or politics, as someone has said: "sans profile". It works through a team which lives as closely as possible to the people, and it attempts to realize the love of Christ in a real encounter with the conditions of their existence. It hopes to be at the same time a means of God's grace for the "reconciling of the nations" and the manifestation of the prayers of countless Christians who carry the suffering of North Africans upon their hearts.

The tragedy of French-Algerian tensions affords no simple analysis and no unambiguous solutions. In the opinion of the present writer, history often presents not only a point of no return but also a point of no issue. Justice becomes injustice through reaction, and the eventual consolidation of power justifies itself within a favorable context. The Christian revelation recognizes the inevitability of historical impasse but also its redemption, which is to say the suffering of Christ for humanity and the confirmation of the value of man's life under the worst possible circumstances. And the suffering of Christ, like the resurrection, takes place not only in the distant past but "in eternity" and therefore in the new life of every Christian. The Christian is not only reconciled in the midst of impasse and given hope in place of despair; he becomes a part of the reconciliation, a sign of judgment and grace, and a creative element by the grace of God the Creator. Hence, political ignorance is no excuse, and political wisdom is not enough; for the Christian, the seriousness of the world's problems are reflected in the love which God causes to mount up in his heart, which is God's self-manifestation in the world and which results in lives of service, intercessory prayer, and shared sorrows and joy.

CIMADE began its work here two years ago at the invitation of the Protestant ministers of Marseille, with after-school activities for children, evening reading classes for men, and home-making instruction for women and girls. The team includes two young women — one a nurse born and reared in Algeria, the other a social worker, daughter of a French admiral — two young men from Switzerland, an Arab-speaking "brother" from the Protestant community of Taize, a part-time worker for teen-age boys, and a handful of volunteers. The main center is in the shabby neighborhood of Rue d'Aix not far from the port, in the heart of the vice and crime of Marseille. The narrow backstreets are crowded with Arab vendors. Packs of olive-skinned children scurry among the boxes and push-carts. Overhead in the twisting alleys, bird-cages, clothes lines, housewives banging shutters and gossiping in shrill voices across the window-sills give the impression of a "casbah". The warm Mediterranean sunlight streams along orange-tiled rooftops and down among weather-beaten buildings.

Through a long, dark archway, past the doorways of several workshops, and down a set of stairs troop thirty to sixty children five evenings each week. Undisciplined and bursting with energy, they are patiently led by songs, games, and crafts to discover new capacities within themselves



and within society. Every Thursday and every other Sunday, they are taken on an outing in the countryside around Marseille, Thursday rather than Saturday being the day that school is out in France. In the summer, there is a chance to go to camp, and on holidays there is always something special planned.

Every night except Sunday, from 6 to 10 o'clock, in an adjoining room twenty to thirty Algerian and Tunisian men apply themselves to learn to read and write. Rough-hewn white-washed beams form a low ceiling; worn brick and cement floors show the great age of the buildings, formerly an olive oil mill. There is something equally anachronistic in the illiteracy of these adults. What a liberation of the spirit to be able to sign their names! What a relief to be able to understand their paychecks! How much self-respect to be able to read the newspaper!

In the midst of reading a passage in the Laubach books or the elementary stories in the children's reader, a friend interrupts with a whisper, and an earnest discussion in Arab follows; the two retreat half-embarrassed into the ante-room, leaving the volunteer puzzled. The instructor, German-born Frere Ulrich of Taize, sticks his head in the doorway and explains that it was the reader's turn in the CIMADE showers.

During the afternoons, the women team-members receive Moslem wives and mothers at the center or go to their homes for instruction in sewing, childcare, or the three R's. The acceptance of Europeans in their apartments represents a notable gain in bridging the gap between two widely different worlds. At the same time, it opens a window of sorcery and superstition. In the North African community in Europe, especially in Marseille where there is not even a mosque, Islam has only a superficial place in the lives of the people. In spite of its being a religion of the Book, there is illiteracy. In spite of its prohibitionism, there are alcoholics. In spite of its divine providence, there are fortune tellers, evil spirits, and witchcraft. Fear and sadness haunt their lives.

On the outskirts of Marseille, an encampment of concrete quonset huts, called **demilunes**, and emergency housing serves several hundred families. CIMADE installed a barrack and remodelled an old "40 and 8" railroad car (**quarante hommes ou huit chevaux**) of World War I fame with the help of an ecumenical work camp. Two Swiss laymen from Lousanne live and work there, conducting a program similar to that at Rue d'Aix and the club-room for adolescents at Boulevard des Dames. Volunteers help with a nursery two mornings each week. A men's group meets evenings. A wading pool and play-yard are enjoyed by the children in the summertime.

The work of CIMADE is financed with the help of sister churches in other lands through the World Council of Churches. Close contacts are maintained with the governmental agencies, private charitable organizations, and the Roman Catholic missions. CIMADE also works among Moslems in Dakar, Algiers, various remote sections throughout France,

and is planning a post in the slums of Lyon. In addition, its work includes refugees from Eastern Europe, students from portions of the French Community in Asia and Africa, the French working class in certain areas, prisoners and ex-convicts. It is the Church World Service and World Council of Churches representative for France, with a constant emphasis on Christian unity. Marc Boegner, widely known among leaders of the ecumenical movement, is president of CIMADE.

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# THE SCROLL

The Journal of the Campbell Institute

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Dear Reader:

It is with a somewhat red face that I sent you the 1959 Fall Issue of The Scroll in the first months of 1960. Illness, coupled with a full schedule as pastor, are the excuses I must plead.

Once again the material will be characterized by variety. We have a large number of interesting articles. Ralph Wilburn, who always gives us something to think about, has produced an excellent article, "Reflections on the Unity We Seek." This article is, in substance, the lecture which Ralph gave at the Consultation on Christian Unity at the College of the Bible, April 7-10, 1959. George Earle Owen, who has long ago convinced us of his administrative ability and his gift for seeing missions in the theological and philosophical context, proves that he also courts the muse in his Three Poems and is a creator of no mean ability.

At my request Paul Gary has given us his impressions of and reflections on the first panel held at Denver. Actually the title of the discussion was "The Impact of Contemporary Theology on the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ," but this does not prevent the article from bringing to us the incisive analysis and sound thinking which those of us who know Paul have come to expect of him.

This fall, my good friend and able associate in the ministry, Bob Boyte, had been beefing to me about the understanding of the multiple ministry reflected in some of the questionnaires he had been receiving. I twisted his arm and got him to put down his own reflections in an article for The Scroll. The result is the usual penetrating discussion which he produces. "The Night I Resigned from the Human Race" is a thought-provoking poetic morality by one of our chaplains, Robert Wilmont Williams. I think you will enjoy reading it as much as I have. No part of this poem may be reproduced without the permission of the author.

Last of all your long-winded Editor and President has outlined the program which the officers of The Scroll have projected for this year. We hope you will approve, for we are very excited about it.

You will notice that The Scroll is printed in offset press this time. Our bank balance is too low for set type, and we wanted you to have all four issues.

Yours for free discussion,

George G. Beazley, Jr.



## REFLECTIONS ON THE NATURE OF THE UNITY WE SEEK

Ralph G. Wilburn  
College of the Bible, Lexington, Kentucky

We begin with the assumption that the essential nature of the church is determined by the revelation of God in Christ. Why are we justified in beginning with this assumption? Because the unique thing about the Christian community is that the substance of its life is derived from the prophetic moment of its beginning: the fellowship-forming influence of Jesus as Christ.

The church is not an institution; it is the "people among the people" which has heard and committed itself to the call of God's Word in Christ, and which is conscious of the abiding presence of His Spirit in its midst, to judge, to redeem, and to reconcile man to God and to one another. The church is a fellowship of persons in Christ, the vital center of which is the spirit of Christlike love.

I. From this assumption it follows that the basic character of the togetherness of this community is determined by the act of God in Christ, which gave it birth, and by which it grows and is sustained, in history.

The unity of the church is therefore a given unity. It is a unity of God's making.

During the past quarter century, the popular, liberal view of the church as a mere voluntary religious association or a mere human contrivance growing out of the natural need for fellowship, has steadily lost ground, due mainly to developments in theology and biblical studies. As a result of the shift toward greater evangelical definiteness in recent theology, the church has been rediscovered, as the community of God's creation.

It follows from this God-given character of the church that its unity cannot be correctly understood merely as growing up from below, as a summation of sociological adjustments, however much these are involved. If the unity of the church were merely something which religious men meet and decide upon, we would be at liberty to choose what class or race should be included, and what excluded. But church unity is not so determined. The church is the Body of Christ; it is a gift coming down from above. This redemptive act of God establishes the unity of the church as a power of reconciliation, breaking down the barriers, so that "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."<sup>1</sup>

On the basis of this Christological foundation, I should like to do two things in this article. First, point out the fallacies

<sup>1</sup> Galatians 3:28.

of two basic types of unity, to which the church, in wide areas of her life, has adhered, types which persist to this very day, impeding the growth of a more adequate manifestation of the unity which God has given us. Second, we shall describe briefly two fundamental aspects of true Christian unity.

## II. The Fallacy of the Authoritarian Type of Unity.

The first erroneous type of unity is the authoritarian type. By the authoritarian type, I mean the kind of church togetherness in which the basic bond which unites the group is, in fact and confession, something other than, and in addition to, the Lordship of Christ.

This external authority other than Christ, which serves as a bond of unity, may find expression in a variety of things. It may take the form of centralized church government, which clamps down upon the local congregation, unduly restricting its freedom, as in Roman Catholicism. It may center in a creed, a body of dogma, or in the Bible itself, giving assent to which is made a requirement for church membership, as in both Catholic and Protestant Orthodoxy. Or again, it may find expression in terms of a uniform pattern of liturgy, which is regarded as the only valid form of worship.

Whatever the variations on the theme, the genius of this authoritarian type lies in the belief that some specific external form (polity, creed, Bible doctrines, liturgical order) is essential to the being of the church. It therefore sets about to establish the cherished form as part of the very essence of the church, and therefore also the very bond of her unity.

Throughout the centuries, Roman Catholicism, the State churches of Protestantism, and the free churches also, have clung to this notion of unity as uniformity. Because Roman Catholicism states this concept of unity so clearly, her position should serve as a constant reminder of how easy it is for the church-centered approach to unity to lead to an idolatrous clericalism, which distorts the truth of church unity into an excuse for institutional pride and presumptuous self-adoration.

It may be seriously doubted, however, whether Protestantism is yet wholly free from this idea of unity as uniformity. To what extent, I wonder, is it true that Protestants, as well as Catholics, would like for the Great Church to be a kind of enlarged model of their own denomination? To what extent do Protestants who insist upon "union on the truth" really mean "the truth as our denomination sees it?" Lutherans would like a united church, but in accordance with the Augsburg Confession. The Episcopalians want unity, but on the basis of the historic episcopate, and perhaps also Apostolic Succession. Disciples want unity, but they would like it so that everyone submits to immersion and to "the ancient order of things," as Disciples understand it.

One of the main road-blocks to unity is this traditional tendency to bind the faith absolutely to some particular form of its expression. We have now become aware, however, of how profoundly all human thinking about these forms of expression is enmeshed in, and determined by, the processes of history. All thinking is colored by one's point of view, which point of view is shaped by the time and space and condition of the individual, enmeshed in the particular context.

If all Christians could appropriate this modern insight and recognize the historical limitations which characterize all forms of expression of the Christian faith, we might be able to get the authoritarian fly out of the ecumenical ointment. We still believe that Thomas Campbell was correct when he said, "Resume that precious, that dear-bought liberty, wherewith Christ has made his people free; a liberty from subjection to any authority but his own in matters of religion."<sup>1</sup>

These, then, are the major fallacies in the authoritarian type of unity: (1) It is wedded too closely to some particular form of the faith. It needs to learn that no definition of doctrine or church structure can legitimately be regarded as irreformable and valid for all time. (2) It tends to idolatry Christ. By "idolatry" Christ we mean that it fails to distinguish clearly between the living Word of God, which is Christ, and man's response to this revelation. This failure leads it to bind Christ inseparably to some particular expression of His saving power, thereby imparting to this form of expression divine qualities, which belong solely to Christ. The result is an idolatrous attachment to relative religious forms. Protest against this idolatry was indeed the element of truth in the traditional Disciple slogan, "No creed but Christ;" though the biblicism of the Disciple fathers prevented them from carrying out the implications of this slogan as thoroughly as they might have done. (3) This authoritarian type of unity not only fails to promote the right of Christian liberty, but it actually tends to stifle this liberty by clamping down upon it from without. This reveals its lack of Christian love and its spirit of sectarian exclusiveness, which shows how far removed this authoritarian type of unity is from the heart of the gospel. Even God Himself refuses to violate the freedom of man which He created. God gives Himself to us in the only way that He can, so as to win our response in freedom, namely, in the suffering of the Cross. In this gospel light of the modus operandi of God, how terribly wrong Christians are to think that they possess the right to give expression to this gospel, in an authoritarian way, which contradicts the character of the working of God, by clamping down from without and attempting to deal with dissent by methods of coercion! (4) The authoritarian type shows that it is operating with a distorted view of revelation, as something objective, something fixed and frozen, and finds little

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Campbell, Declaration and Address (Indianapolis: International Convention of Disciples of Christ, 1949), pp. 14-15.

room in its theology for the continuous work of the Holy Spirit, who in prophetic souls may disclose needed self-criticism and new insights for further correction and growth. As Walter Marshall Horton says, "Honest dissent is the Church's sensitive antennae, through which the Holy Spirit helps us to 'keep abreast of truth' as we face 'new occasions' in each generation."<sup>1</sup>

### III. The Inadequacy of the Reductionist Unity of Rationalism.

A second major type of unity is also inadequate. We may call this the reductionist type. This pathway to unity represents the broad spirit of rationalism. It says: reduce the basis of common agreement to the least common denominator. Agreement on these few essential points of doctrine is all the unity that we want or need!

The philosopher, Leibnitz, was one of the early advocates of this approach. Standing on the watchtower of the new seventeenth century rationalism, Leibnitz, in his discussions on unity with Bossuet, Catholic Bishop of Meaux, summoned all Christians to boil down the essentials to a basic minimum, and regard all other theological differences as insignificant.

Liberal Protestantism, determined by Enlightenment rationalism, has made much of this reductionist approach to the problem of unity, by simplifying the confessional requirements for unity.

Now there is both truth and error in this reductionist approach. If it is fair to construe the theological import of this reductionist plea as an affirmation that the basic content of the faith has power to unite Christian people, then the plea is true. The very fact that the World Council of Churches became possible on the basis of church agreement that "Jesus Christ is God and Saviour" would seem to prove that the plea is true. And, of course, it did establish the right of liberty.

History has shown, however, that modern rationalism did not always move toward Christ. The spirit at work in this modern surge of liberty sometimes cultivated an attitude of theological indifference. Adolf Harnack made explicit what was implicit in this reductionist method when he contended that the message of Jesus was "simpler than the churches would like to think . . . . The Gospel, as Jesus proclaimed it," said Harnack, "has to do with the Father only and not with the Son."<sup>2</sup> The reductionist road seems thus to end in the plea for nothing more than the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, as the ground of unity. And the humanists go one step further; they trim away the idea of God, for after all this is a theological belief; they want a unity based solely on the belief in human brotherhood.

<sup>1</sup>The Christian Century, July 10, 1957.

<sup>2</sup>Adolf von Harnack, What is Christianity? (New York: Harper & Bros., Publishers, 1957), pp. 143-44.



Now we freely grant that it is legitimate for social clubs and community gatherings to hold together by the vague feeling that "the more we get together, the happier we'll be." And it is equally consistent for those of the Hindu religion to follow the call to this vague type of unity, for the central principle of Hinduism is that all religions and philosophies, equally, represent broken lights of Eternal Truth. Hence, for some 2700 years India has been the home of this boundless kind of religious tolerance.

But now, is Christian unity really nothing but the humanism of Hinduism? If so, perhaps we should cease witnessing to the gospel and propagate the doctrine of Hinduism. Is it not stretching things a bit to say that Christians can dip their hands in that from which the gospel silently turns away?

This unity of indifferences shows itself to be lacking in evangelical depth and in the quality of imperativeness. This is the first thing wrong with reductionist road to unity: it contains a tendency away from the gospel, toward the unity of indifference.

There is also a second thing wrong with it. Although the formation of the World Council demonstrates the validity of one aspect of the reductionist plea, other aspects of it have been shown to be inadequate and unrealistic. The actual growth of unity in ecumenical Christianity has shown that the amount of Christian conviction and practise, which we share in common, is amazingly large. In this sense, the advocates of the reductionist type have lost the battle, and their plea has been outmoded by historical fact. The fundamentals have, of course, supplied a basis for cooperation and discussion; but in themselves they are not sufficient to supply us with the fullness of faith and life, which belongs to real growth in unity.

We must therefore overcome the negative attitude toward theology, which was generated by reductionist rationalism. The fullness of unity will not be achieved by theological indecisiveness. There is a function which theological statements can perform, other than being used legalistically as instruments of division. They are necessary for the growth of really significant unity, in the sense that they represent movement in the right direction. The way to unity is not doctrinal uniformity; but it is the way of coming increasingly closer to the center of the gospel of God, through theological clarity and understanding.

If the road to a fuller and more perfect manifestation of the unity we have in Christ is not by theological reduction to a skeleton creed, but rather by direction toward the center, God's redemptive act in Christ, perhaps confessions, in this sense, are of vital importance. If so, Disciples must ask themselves anew: what does this mean in reference to the confessional implications of the traditional slogan, "No creed but Christ."

These two roads to unity have been tried and found wanting: an oppressive uniformity, which idolatrizes Christ; and a reductionist whittling down to the least common denominator, which moves away from the redemptive center of the gospel.

#### IV. Two Dimensions of Unity Implied by the Church's Christological Basis.

We turn now, more positively, to characterize briefly two fundamental aspects of a unity that is grounded in God's mighty act of redemption in Christ.

First of all, if the church is a fellowship in history, but a fellowship of faith in Christ, bound together and empowered by the continuing presence of the Holy Spirit, a community which shares in the eternal life of God, there are two dimensions to the church's life, and therefore also to her unity: the inner and outer dimensions. An adequate concept of unity must keep in view the distinction between these two dimensions.

Part of our ecumenical task is to promote a fuller realization of the inner dimension of unity, which has to do with the life that all Christians share in common: the gift of grace, the cultivation of life "in the Spirit," growth in Christlikeness, in short, sharing fully in the life of God, as He gives Himself to us in the covenant community. The New Testament refers to this dimension of unity as the "fellowship of Jesus Christ",<sup>1</sup> or the "fellowship of the Holy Spirit."<sup>2</sup>

We are grateful to the seventeenth century pietists for placing the emphasis on this inner dimension. Pietism insisted that Christianity is primarily an individual experience and life, and that all who are truly saved, whatever sect or name, are really "one in Christ." The Dutch Poet Jeremias de Decker, a friend of Rembrandt, expressed it aptly, when he said:

"Do you believe that your church gives salvation  
Condemning mine as heresy and sect?  
God has his friends in each denomination  
From every one Christ chooses his elect."<sup>3</sup>

The Church, however, is not merely a spiritual entity; it is not a Platonic Idea. The church is a concrete, empirical community in history. It is a real part of the life of the world. And this means that its destiny is to be realized in history. At this point, the outer institutional aspect of the church's life comes into view. Here we are confronted with a baffling diversity: doctrinal, ecclesiastical, liturgical diversity.

<sup>1</sup>I Corinthians 1:9.

<sup>2</sup>II Corinthians 13:13.

<sup>3</sup>As quoted by W. A. Visser T'Hooft, Our Ecumenical Task in the Light of History (Geneva: John Knox House Association, 1955), p. 10.

Important as the spirit of Pietism is, by way of reminding us of the inward spiritual center of the church's life, it will not do to say that this is all the unity we need. All praise and honor to Brother Zinzendorf, the celebrated Moravian pietist, when he exclaimed, "We will not let ourselves be imprisoned within any sect." But he was much too one-sided when he added, "We have only to do with the hearts of men. . .and our basic purpose is to realize the high priestly prayer: That all may be one."<sup>1</sup>

Since there is only one church, it is imperative that its internal unity be reflected and realized, more adequately, by external structures which do justice to it. True, the Christian community is bound to an authority which transcends the relative forms that express it. But so long as these outer forms are such that they prevent those who have been received into the Body of Christ from sharing fully in work and worship, they are violating, and indeed separating themselves from, the real inner unity of the church, the bond of which is Christlike love. To the extent that this is true, the church must confess her failure to be the church, as God intends it. And to the extent that the church allows herself to be determined by, racial, national, social, and ideological barriers, which alienate men from each other and block the growth of mutual love, to this extent she must confess her failure to be the community where the Spirit of Christ reigns. The churches can scarcely help fulfill Christ's ministry of reconciliation so long as their own life manifests the spirit of unreconciled partisanship.

Now as to the matter of dealing theologically with the divisions in the outer form of church life, I must beg to differ with some of our leading minds in the cause for unity, who evaluate the theological conferences which, for example, have been promoted by Faith and Order, by admitting that such conferences have done much good, in that the participants have come to a better understanding of one another's positions. But, these men add, "the diversity of convictions about doctrines, church polity, forms of worship, and 'orders' is not a shade less after two decades of intensive and almost continuous study and discussion under the most friendly and favorable conditions."<sup>2</sup>

Well now, several Disciples could be named whose fixation on an immersionist mode of baptism has been broken by this precise method of theological discussion. Nor should we forget the fact that forty times in the past forty-seven years two or more churches have merged to become one, seventeen of which mergers have brought together churches belonging to different confessional groups. Such mergers have become possible only by modification in church polity and by adjustment in confessional affirmation.

Furthermore, the Lutheran and the Reformed churches in Germany and the Netherlands have reached significant agreements on the meaning of the Lord's Supper, as a result of persistent theolog-

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>2</sup>W. E. Garrison, The Quest and Character of a United Church (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957), p. 208.

ical discussion. These agreements are expressed in eight articles, drawn up by the Commission on the Lord's Supper of the EKD, articles received and approved by the Evangelical Synod on July 25, 1958.<sup>1</sup> The report of the Commission represents the result of ten years of theological effort, in which modern insights in theology, biblical exegesis, ecclesiastical and theological history, combined with the new sense of unity and responsibility in ecumenical Christianity, have significantly altered the modern understanding of this sacrament, resulting in real advance in the cause of unity, in Germany. In view of the longstanding cleavage between the Lutheran and the Reformed wings of Protestantism, this ecumenical consensus represents a most encouraging achievement. And the point is: it is the product of theological conversation!

We would argue then, that for growth in a profound kind of unity, theological development is indispensable, though, of course, such growth must always take place within a climate of genuine freedom. Indeed, it is most encouraging that in terms of the theological aspect of the church's unity, we are already a substantial distance beyond a vague sense of oneness which consists merely in sharing in common the empty name of "Christianity", or in agreeing that "Jesus is Lord." Something of the extent of theological agreement is evident in the words of the pre-Lund Commission on the Nature of the Church:

Every communion holds that the Church is not a human contrivance, but God's gift for the salvation of the world; that the saving acts of God in Christ brought it into being, that it persists in continuity in history by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Every communion likewise believes that the Church has a vocation to worship God in His holiness and to proclaim the Gospel to every creature, and that she is equipped by God with the various gifts of the Spirit for the building up of the Body of Christ. And every communion believes that the Church is composed of forgiven sinners, yet through faith already partakes in the eternal life of the Kingdom of God. These agreements cover the Church's origin, the mystery of the Church's present being, and the Church's goal. They ascribe to the Church both a divine and a human element; both a possession and an anticipation of the age to come. They imply an insistence upon the holiness of the Church without any identification of this with a mere human moralism; and insistence upon the visibility of the Church without obscuring the tension between the Church as it is now, and the Church as it is destined to become.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Zur Lehre vom heiligen Abendmahl (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1958)

<sup>2</sup>Faith and Order Commission Paper No. 7, The Church, p. 13.



We submit that here is a quite substantial theological bond of unity, to which we all bear witness, which is happily free from the evils of dogmatism, and yet is considerably beyond a pietistically vague Jesus-faith or a reductionist rational creed.

In regard to the theological character of unity, these are always the two distortions to avoid: the pietistic fuzziness of theological indecisiveness, on the one hand; and the frozen wastes of doctrinaire dogmatism, on the other. By religious sentimentalism the Church lapses into theological vagueness and obscurantism; by dogmatism her religious life crystallizes into formalism. By both, the Church forfeits her capacity to serve the cause of true Christian unity.

#### V. The Need for Unity to be Catholic in Substance, but Protestant in Principle.

Closely correlated with the inner and outer dimensions of unity stands another pair of principles demanded by a unity that is grounded in God's redemptive act in Christ. If the terms are correctly understood, we may call these the "catholic" and "protestant" elements of the church's unity. To borrow Paul Tillich's phrase, the unity of the church must be catholic in substance, but protestant in principle.

By the word "catholic", in this context, we mean the substance of Christian history and tradition, in its total sweep through the centuries, including the witness of Scripture, the mind of the historic church, the great Confessional Statements of the faith, church order, the sacraments, and the devotional life. Why now must this catholic scope characterize the church's unity?

First of all, because Christianity is a continuing community in history, and it becomes blunted and distorted whenever it attempts to cut itself off from its historic roots. God has willed to complete the revelation of Himself in Christ through these historical means of Scripture and the witnessing, Christian community. Tradition therefore is an integral part of the togetherness of the ongoing Christian community, in history. A unity which omits this catholic substance of the church's life thereby shows that it is operating with a distorted doctrine of Christ and a questionable doctrine of the Holy Spirit, for the assumption would then be that one could share fully in the Holy Spirit, in a sectarian isolation, which loses a sense of organic oneness with the wholeness of the church.

Protestants must banish the illusion of the restoration idea, which misled many to ignore the bulk of tradition entirely and attempt to derive their life exclusively from Scripture. We cannot and ought not think that we owe nothing to the past. We cannot and ought not act as if there were no Christian history. It is an illusion to think that we can begin de novo. The unhistorical outlook

of restoration groups must be transcended by greater historical realism. The unity of the church can be what it ought to be only if Protestants, and Catholics, and the Orthodox overcome their fragmentation of the Body of Christ, and learn to embody the wholeness of the church.

And Protestants must also recover the Catholic idea that the church is an integral part of God's redemptive work in the world, and that in a real sense the church is a bearer of God's grace. The church is a historic community by means of which, normally, God carries forward His redemptive work. As Emil Brunner puts it, "The New Testament Ecclesia. . . is divine revelation and salvation in action."<sup>1</sup>

Yet at the same time, the church's unity must be Protestant in principle. What do we mean by this? We mean that Christ the Lord is infinitely greater than our finite response to Him. Christ remains what He is: the transcendent Lord of his body the church. He is not only the Lord in the church; He remains, at all times, Lord over it.

The Protestant principle is the principle of prophetic judgment against all forms of human pride, all forms of ecclesiastical self-adoration, all forms of human self-sufficiency. Protestant Christianity says that Christ the Lord is the dynamic source of all spiritual fulfillment in the church, but that this creative source cannot be identified with any form of its fulfillment. The Lordship of God in Christ is realized, concretely, in and through the church, yes--this is the truth of Catholicism. Yet never perfectly, never adequately, but always in a way in which the empirical church itself, together with the entire world, stands under the judgment of His transcendent Word--this is the truth of Protestantism. So that as Daniel Day Williams says, "a radical application of the Protestant principle does not mean abolition of form and tradition but a continual openness to reformation in the light of fresh encounter with God's Word and Spirit."<sup>2</sup>

## VI. CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, we suggest that a kairos has been reached in ecumenical growth; the time is ripe to carry through three revisions in the outer structure of the church's life. First, the formation of some new church structures which will make possible a more forthright mutual recognition of one another's Ministries, leading to more pulpit interchanges, both temporary and permanent. Second, more definite theological developments must take place, so that a mutual recognition of one another's baptisms and memberships can be

<sup>1</sup>Emil Brunner, The Misunderstanding of the Church (London: Lutterworth Press, 1952), p. 10.

<sup>2</sup>Daniel Day Williams, What Present-day Theologians are Thinking (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952), p. 132.

more frankly and securely established, and so that inter-communion can become more frequent and more meaningful. Third, some revision must be made in the matter of church polity and government, which will make possible a greater unity in the total corporate witness of the church, as she calls all men to the fellowship of the one body in Christ.

These minimal needs for revision in the outer dimension of the church would seem to be demanded by the inner reality of the church's unity. And we believe that they can be achieved, if the Christological basis of unity, which we have discussed, be taken seriously, if all would face up to the cultural relativity of the different confessional bodies and recognize that a single uniform church structure is not an essential element in the unity of the Church Universal, and if they would remain critically aware of the fact that although variety is inevitable, it is valid only if it is not allowed to generate a spirit of exclusiveness, which disrupts the organic bond that unites us all, members equally of the family of God.

### THREE POEMS

George Earle Owen  
United Christian Missionary Society, Indianapolis, Indiana

#### The Nature of God

("Now abideth faith, hope, love")

Our God is a God of faith,  
Faith in man.  
Man lives by faith.

Faith's so related to man's nature and need  
That God sent His Son as the Word and the Deed  
Of a living faith.

\* \* \* \* \*

Our God is a God of hope,  
Hope in man.  
Man lives by hope.

Hope's so related to man's nature and need;  
That the Gospel's the bread on which he may feed  
His abiding hope.

\* \* \* \* \*

Our God is a God of love,  
Love for man.  
Man lives by love.

Love's so related to man's nature and need;  
That God's Kingdom will come and evil recede  
By redeeming Love.

To Do God's Will  
(Operation Obedience)

- Out in the desert  
My Master stayed,  
Fasted and prayed,  
For forty long days  
To find the ways  
To do God's will.
- Out of the garden  
My Savior went  
With struggle spent  
But purpose bent  
With full intent  
To do God's will.
- Out on Golgatha  
Was Christ crucified  
By friends denied  
Tortured till he cried  
But bravely he died  
To do God's will.
- Out of the grave  
My Redeemer came  
Gone the shame  
Glorious his name  
Invincible his claim  
To do God's will.
- Out of my leisure  
Have I time to meet  
Temptation in retreat  
The Devil to defeat  
My submission to complete  
To do God's will?
- Out of my prayer  
Am I able to find  
The Christ-like mind  
Steeled but resigned  
And ever inclined  
To do God's will?
- Out of my suffering  
Have I perceived  
When deeply grieved  
How joy's received  
And tension relieved  
To do God's will?



Out of my duties  
Have I discerned  
Obedience is earned  
Strength is returned  
When I've learned  
To do God's will?

### Lord Stretch Our Lives

Our minds grow dull with idle thought,  
On what we wish, not what we ought.  
Lord stretch our minds till we can see  
How small we are, how big we may be.

Our hearts grow gross with selfish care  
On what to eat, and what to wear.  
Lord stretch our hearts till we can feel  
The needs of others, and love's appeal.

Our souls grow starved for spiritual fare,  
A dynamic faith, and a life of prayer.  
Lord stretch our souls till we can find  
A place for Thee in our crowded mind.

Our wills grow lax from indecision,  
From following the crowd and not thy wisdom.  
Lord stretch our wills till we can say,  
Not what I want, but what I may.

Our lives grow petty with small affairs,  
With trivial things and worldly wares.  
Lord stretch our lives till we can grow  
To the spiritual heights and goals we know.

REPORT AND CRITIQUE OF THE FIRST PANEL  
DISCUSSION AT DENVER

Paul Gary  
Phillips University, Enid, Oklahoma.

The panel members could hardly have been chosen for better ideological balance: Dr. W. E. Garrison, respected everywhere as scholar-philosopher and Christian historian, an "impenitent liberal", by his own assertion, represented the "old liberals". Robert Thomas, Pastor of First Christian Church, St. Joseph, Missouri, who, although he did not state his position as clearly as did Dr. Garrison, by implication would probably be classified as typical of "young liberals." Walter Sikes, who might by some be classified as a "penitent liberal", by word and deed aligns himself with those who seem to advocate an energetic program of unity of denominational groups. Mr. Sikes seems quite readily to embrace contemporary theology, although one should be hesitant in classing him with the thoroughgoing neo-orthodox. Dr. Ronald Osborn, church historian and student of the ecumenical movement should probably be categorized as a modern Disciple who wants to bring "the plea" into the modern setting of the current ecumenical climate. Not a theologian or a philosopher by profession, he is probably the most objective of the four panelists.

The issue proposed, The Impact of Theology on the Disciples of Christ, was never defined in any workable dimension. Theology was never clearly defined. Dr. Sikes did suggest that it was, as he seemed to think is too often the case, taken to mean contemporary European theology or neo-orthodoxy. None of the panelists except Dr. Osborn seemed to be considering the theological content in Disciples' history. The topic, The Impact of Theology, apparently was taken to mean that this "Impact" is a historically recent event.

Again, except for Osborn's remarks, one could have supposed that the Disciples had never had a theology. As a matter of historical fact, has there ever been a time in which the Disciples have not had a theology? A clear Biblical theology seems present in the movement from the beginning, if we mean by this, a consideration of the Biblical writings in their wholeness, or as they are relevant to God's purpose for man and the universe. Discussion about the "Law of Pardon", seems to be theological in nature and we have never been found lacking in such discussion. One can hardly read the Christian System and the Scheme of Redemption, without sensing a type of Systematic Theology. Our absorption with Church history indicates a historical theology. Yet, we seem to speak of "The Impact of Theology" as if somehow we had been outside of it and only recently have we felt its impact. If there was a "liberal theology", then certain groups among us had it.

How can a panelist then say that theology has had no impact on the Disciples and probably won't have, in view of their disin-

terest, in the future? It seems obvious that he means contemporary theology or more likely, neo-orthodoxy. His statement must be taken as rhetorical. Then there is the implication that neo-orthodoxy is the only contemporary theology; which ignores the presence of several emerging theological schools of thought. The exception to this was contained implicatively in Dr. Sikes' remarks when he called attention to the fact that we have had and do have many statements of faith.

After Dr. Osborn's historical statement, Mr. Thomas made, what may have been a rhetorical statement that, "theology had made no impact on Disciples", for which he was devotionally grateful and indicated that he hoped it never would. It was apparent that he meant: (a) That contemporary European theology had not made much headway among us; (b) that we had not and should not be beguiled by scholars into any common statement of faith. He was anxious that our traditional liberties be not abridged by any such denominational "fences". Our "liberty" is sacred and can only be secured by maintaining the one common ingredient, belief in Jesus as the son of God. This is all we have and all we need.

Dr. Garrison graciously agreed that theology had made an impact upon Disciples in that they are thinking and talking more about theology but warned against such thinking and talking if it led to any weakening of our traditional liberal position. He seemed to be saying with our liberal fathers that traditionally we stand firmly upon ecumenical ground and should not desert it just when the ecumenical movement seems ready to accept our traditional position. Our liberty is based upon, and preserved by, the breadth of our traditional acceptance of all who come on the ground of the confession of Christ. We had first proposed this broad and liberal base and should not now renounce it for any "statement of faith" by which we might match like "statements" by others.

Dr. Sikes appeared to accept our status as one Christian group among others. We ought to recognize our status and formulate a "testimony" of our position in clear and definite terms so that both we and others might know what we believe. It is not clear whether he was asking for a doctrinal statement which would be binding upon all Disciples or whether he wanted a definitive statement of our traditional faith and practice to which the great majority could freely subscribe. It seemed clear to this writer that he was asking only for the latter. Both Garrison and Thomas seemed to infer that he was proposing the first. In any case, it was plain that they were against either of these, if one may judge by the vigor of their rebuttal.

Dr. Osborn seemed to hold that a practical approach to the current ecumenical movement would require some shift in structure and some consolidation of Disciple forces and a more compact definition of our beliefs and aims.

The Liberal sentiment expressed was typical of that school of thought; our personal liberty must be preserved. There must be no surrender to creedal statements that would curtail our freedom to behave as we please and freely express ourselves on all matters other than the central doctrine of Campbell's declaration and Stone's formula for freedom. This was repeated many times and reinforced from the floor in at least one quite lengthy statement. It was strikingly clear, that however much they may disagree otherwise with the Fundamentalists, in this point the Liberals are in agreement with them. At the same time, we should recognize that the Liberal is much more consistent in his practice of this principle than is the Fundamentalist.

One striking feature of the Liberal viewpoint is their apparent idealism regarding the liberty we have under our traditional position and their insistence that such a formula will be productive of unity.

Can we really say that our talk of liberty is other than abstract? Do we not have not one but many tests of faith that have and are being used as tests of fellowship? Do we have a workable program of unity or are we engaging in wishful thinking? In one town of 40,000, there are five congregations of "our people", all of whom hold to "the plea" and embrace the "broad principles" of both Campbell and Stone and yet refuse fellowship of any kind with one another. Many young ministers who accept this "broad principle" of brotherhood and fellowship, go out to minister in the field only to be "read out" on the basis of some local or regional creed, (statement of faith). Agencies attempting to do our missionary work under our traditional "position" find themselves suspect and caught in the cross fire of our multiplicity of "creedal statements". Yet two great sections of the Disciples, the Liberals and the Fundamentalists still seem to believe that our "plea" in the context of its historical structure is the only way by which unity can be achieved. This theological and structural "laissez-faire" is what we should offer the ecumenical community.

What our multiple and divisive local creeds have cost in terms of ministerial recruits and other important areas is difficult to assess.

The issue seems to be: Is "cooperation" of autonomous individuals and local congregations on a "life and work" basis as far as we wish to go or shall we venture, at least, a common testimony of our position on the level of "faith and order"? Would a comprehensive statement of our traditional "theological" position be destructive or our traditional "witness" of unity devoid of theological statements?

Again, can we so neatly separate "life and work" from "faith and order", except in the abstract? Doesn't experience indicate that they inevitably become intangled in any concrete situation.



Isn't such a theory of separation based on the presupposition that what we believe, (faith and order), need not be relevant to what we do, (life and work)? Is such a presupposition realistic?

(Footnote: We are aware of the danger of a report of this nature. It is almost certain to oversimplify and distort to some extent. We can only say that the above constitutes our impression for whatever it may be worth.)

## THE MULTIPLE MINISTRY AND THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS

Robert H. Boyte

First Christian Church, Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

A conservative estimate, based on the 1958 Year Book of the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) shows there are at least four hundred churches in the brotherhood that are served by more than one minister or full-time staff person. As our churches continue to grow, both in size and in variety of program, this number will increase. The growth of the multiple ministry is paralleled by the growth of educational buildings in America. Just as the educational building of the average church has grown from a lean-to on the back of the sanctuary to a multi-storied structure of steel and glass, so the multiple ministry has grown from "someone to help out the preacher" to a full-fledged ministry.

## THE PROBLEM OF THE MULTIPLE MINISTRY

The presence in a church of two full-time staff people has created noticeable tensions. Although no proof is required, the rapid turnover of directors of Christian education, associate ministers, ministers of youth, and similar personnel, attest to its presence. Whenever Christian education workers get together, the tensions of their jobs are either the announced or unannounced topic. An analysis of this problem seems to be a favorite among seminary students in the field of Christian education. Studies of "Staff relationships", of the "Status of the Director", of the "Role of the Minister of Education", and similar problems are frequently pursued. These studies are buttressed by the results of elaborate questionnaires, broadcast across the brotherhood.

These questionnaires go beyond the expected queries of salary, parsonage, vacation, and "fringe benefits". In a petulant tone they inquire, "Were you installed when you began your work at your present church? If so, when: Sunday morning \_\_\_, Evening \_\_\_, Other \_\_\_." The extreme of this tendency is seen in one questionnaire which lists twenty-four aspects of the director's job (vacation church school, counseling, youth program, etc.) with the request to do three things: (1) Check the ones you are requested to do. (2) Number in order of importance those you consider your

greatest contribution. (3) Number in order of importance how you think the minister would rank your contributions.

The direct approach asks, "Your status in the church: Co-worker \_\_\_\_; accepted, but not as a co-worker \_\_\_\_; uncertain \_\_\_\_; other \_\_\_\_." (It is interesting to note that the surveys scarcely question the presence of tension, they simply set out to measure it.)

Although the tension is common to many churches and many people are involved in it, there have been few efforts to ease it. It has not been solved; it has only been made tolerable. "The patient has not improved, but he's resting easier."

The usual way in which this problem is met is by a strict delineation of duties. Many ministers and directors agree that this is the easiest way out of a difficult situation. The minister leaves the education program of the church strictly alone; the director clings to his "job analysis." With each working as hard as possible in his own area, and keeping a speaking acquaintance with the other, the work of the church is supposed to proceed. Under such conditions, an individual situation may fluctuate between two extremes. On the one hand, the director may become a specialist in a particular area of the church's life or, on the other hand, he may become a minister to a small church of his own that is a part of the larger church. If this portrayal appears over-drawn, recall the saying, "I'm too old to work with the young people; I let my director do that." Or, on the other hand, recall the concern of many directors to be called "Minister of Christian Education."

#### IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROBLEM

Before we offer some suggestions to solve the problem of the multiple ministry, let us reflect on the entire situation and what it means for the Protestant church in America. The trend toward the strict delineation of duties, formal staff meetings and the like is a direct transferral of the methods of big business to the religious world. (Is there much difference between the senior minister meeting with the associate ministers of education, evangelism and membership, and the president of a large corporation meeting with the vice-presidents in charge of public relations, sales and research development?) The virtues of efficiency and smoothness sought in the business world have been attained in the church by this formation of the multiple ministry. To be sure, communication is needed and efficiency is a worthy goal. But this resemblance to big business is too close to be ignored.

What this drive for efficiency does to the ministry is even more crucial than the similarity to big business. The increasing specialization of the ministry is not unlike the specialization of the medical profession. In both cases specialization has resulted in the loss of personal relationships. The specialized minister, like the specialized physician, is known for what he knows and can

do, not for what he is. Personal relations have given way to a selling of services.

Once ministers become known for the services they can render, rather than for the persons they are, the ministry has capitulated to what Erich Fromm has called our "commodity-conscious culture." No longer is the minister primarily a person, but an organizer, administrator, educator or whatever. The Protestant minister has been one of the last representatives of a personalistic culture. But with the sharply drawn lines of responsibility on many church staffs, this too has gone.

There is another cultural phenomenon related to the multiple ministry--a contemporary one of status-seeking. One presumes that now the religious educators will find a less weighted word than "status" to describe what they are seeking in the church. But in the days prior to Vance Packard, educators were not ashamed to bemoan their lack of "status." What an irony--the same group that was weeping over its lack of status was simultaneously clamoring for the title of "Minister", which originally meant "servant!"

So we see that two of the problems that plague our culture have found a comfortable home within the church itself. Rather than a refuge from the exploitation of personality, the church has become the place where personality has been sold for the sake of a smoothly operating machine. Rather than seek meaningful relationships with the minister, the commodity-conscious church asks, "What do you have to offer? . . . Can you direct a financial drive? . . . Can you organize a youth program?" So it should not be surprising that the minister called on such a basis begins to bear the marks of the "status seeker," another blight on contemporary society.

This points to a further example of the capitulation of the church to the norms of the culture. The ministry in America has assumed the characteristic of the old American image, the rugged individualist who created his empire by the force of hard work and high ideals. It is not surprising that the culture which exalts the "go-getter" and the "organizer" would ask for similar attributes in its ministry. Progressiveness, drive, zeal, fervor are among the qualities sought today in the Protestant minister.

The tendency toward the conformity of the Protestant ministry to the American dream has not only led away from the Protestant view of the priesthood of believers, but it has pressed an unbearable load on the minister himself. The nature of his ministry is largely determined by the demands of his culture. He must play the role which he has been assigned. This is the role of the activist, the live-wire. So when he attempts to minister to people's needs, it is not as a trained priest of the priesthood of believers, and certainly not as the representative of the concerned community. He must do something, at least say something, that will bring results. This places the minister in a dilemma. Not having the full

course of seven sacraments from which to draw, yet with the situation demanding action and results, the minister becomes a "priest without sacraments" or better, a priest with "do-it-yourself" sacraments. His sacraments are the hearty smile, the firm handshake, the well-timed story, the ready advice. Eschewing holy garments, his vestments are the department store copy of what the well-dressed executive is wearing. Richard Niebuhr sums him up in one phase, "Pseudocharismatic personality."

The church's function is to proclaim meaning and wholeness and salvation to a lost world. Let us hope it can listen to its own message and regain some meaning and health itself. To paraphrase Paul, "How are they to hear the message of wholeness from a fragmented preacher? And how can men preach unless they are whole?" Unless the gospel can offer salvation to the church who would proclaim it, it is powerless to save the world that is not interested in hearing it.

#### THE PROTESTANT APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM

The Protestant heritage speaks a needed word to today's distressed ministry. It spells out the meaning of the priesthood of believers in the day of the multiple ministry. This means that the church doesn't have one minister, or two or three, but that the church has a ministry. Transcending the concern for status, and overarching the cry for efficiency, is the plea for a ministry of the church.

The insights of textual studies and Biblical criticism lead us to look at the church with fresh eyes. Sinful and petty though it be, it is this witnessing community which enables us to stand in relationship to Christ. Studies show that our individualistic approach to the ministry is not only inadequate, it is unBiblical. It is the ministry of the church, not the ministry of the preacher, called forth by our new understandings of the Biblical message.

So the first thing the multiple ministry must understand is that the ministry of the church is not limited to a professional staff. When this is understood, the local church ceases being the stage for the exhibition of prima donnas and becomes the headquarters where trained laymen oversee and participate in the far-flung ministry of the church. The ministry of the church is neither to be coveted by one man nor fought over by two. It is an act of love to be shared by the entire fellowship. The task of administering such a deed can be sufficiently humbling to enable two men, though ambitious and sinful, to work together in harmony.

The priesthood of believers also implies that the non-professional ministry can often be more effective than the professional sort. As James Hastings Nichols has said, "The ministrations of the clergyman, in fact, may not be the most effective expression of the reconciling power in the community. By the visible



integrity of their lives, housewives may often minister Christ more effectivly to each other than can a clergyman whose housekeeping experience is desultory."

The superiority of the nonprofessional ministry is frequently attested to today. Often the minister is suspect. He is regarded as a Holy Joe and a money raiser. In today's cynical era, he is considered to be (and frequently is) a man on the make, an ecclesiastical organization man. To those who see the ministry in such a light, the unaffected concern of the layman attracts where all the experience and knowledge of the clergy repels. The "mutual ministry of believers" can take the edge off professional jealousy and status seeking, and let the multiple ministry recognize the depth of the church's purpose.

The doctrine of the priesthood of believers enables the ministry to see itself as it really is--as sinful and anxious, as well as sincere and humble. But the cloak of goodness and moral perfection has been thrust on the Protestant minister for so long that he is beginning to feel at home in it. Only when the minister sees this cloak for what it is can his ministry become genuine and only when participants in a multiple ministry realize their own and accept each other's pride will the multiple ministry overcome its strife.

#### SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

With this analysis of the multiple ministry today and this reminder of the richness of the Protestant interpretation of the ministry, let us offer a few suggestions as to what can be done about the problem. Since the multiple ministry today is most nearly confined to the pastoral and educational ministry these suggestions will be related to those two phases of the multiple ministry.

The first suggestion is that the religious educator must represent a ministry, not a program; he must be a minister, not a "director." The educational ministry of the church must seek to involve itself with lives, not merely with programs. This also implies that the educational ministry of the church must minister in traditional forms to the entire congregation. Although the ministry today takes on many organizational aspects, these aspects have not replaced the simple, face-to-face relationships of the pastoral call in times of need, trouble or joy. No amount of successful programming can take the place of this sort of relationship.

Often the educational ministry of the church has resembled a pressure-block, or at best a clique, rather than a ministry. To make its contribution to the valid multiple ministry Christian education must use its greatest characteristic, the power to change lives, to recreate the church. For this to happen it must sacrifice its love of professional attitudes and jargon for a pastoral relationship to the entire church.

The second suggestion relates to the pastoral ministry. If the multiple ministry is to become the able servant of the church the pastoral ministry must recognize and come to terms with the understandings and insights of Christian education. The pastoral ministry must understand that Christian education has come of age.

The aims of Christian education and the pastoral ministry are probably closer now than at any time since the beginning of the Christian education movement. Today Christian education sees its task as primarily theological. But providing theological discussion and theologically based curriculum is only part of its task. The task is not finished when theology is discussed. It must also be appropriated. It is not sufficient, for example, to hold a discussion about acceptance. There must also be an atmosphere where acceptance can occur. Thus the church becomes the proving ground for theological insights.

For some pastoral ministers a confrontation with this sort of Christian education would be their first experience with theology. This is a noteworthy reversal. In the past the educational ministry has represented just a haloed variety of progressive education. Frequently today it is the most theologically astute group in the church. So for the multiple ministry to be a united ministry the pastoral wing must understand that the Sunday school is ready to join the church. It must realize that the days of "Jesus Wants Me For a Sunbeam" are gone. It must recognize that Christian education represents more than a fertile field for evangelism. Christian education is now a theological discipline.

The third suggestion is pertinent to the administration of the local church served by two or more ministers. These ministers must be more vitally related to one another than a formal staff meeting would indicate. Their relationships with one another must be characterized by companionship and comradeship, rather than by lines of responsibility. Their meetings must be frequent, informal and open. They must deal with program matters, of course, but they also must be concerned with pertinent information of the parish, and what is equally important, with the interests and activities of one another.

And finally, the ministry (be it single or multiple) must understand that the final responsibility of the church rests not with the ministry, but with God. The church neither belongs to the ministry nor finally depends upon it. It belongs to Christ. It is dependent on the love of God.

The multiple ministry enables the church to express this love in particular ways and to an increasing number of people. It enables the church to provide a balanced ministry to all its members. It provides for a cross-fertilization of ideas in the church's program and prevents the awful loneliness of the ministry. It is regrettable that this ministry is so often consumed by jealousy and

pointless competition. If the multiple ministry were true to its Protestant heritage and sensitive to the projections of culture, the church could become Christ-centered, not preacher-centered, and even the ministry could participate in the joy of the Christian faith.

## THE NIGHT I RESIGNED FROM THE HUMAN RACE

Robert Wilmont Williams  
Chaplain, Fort Campbell Kentucky

Roil the waters of a stream  
And you have a muddy creek;  
Roil the waters of a dream  
And you have a nightmare.

Dreams are the strangest things.  
They speak a language all their own,  
Rich in imagery,  
Tongues that speak in code  
The deepest thoughts of the human heart,  
Accents ludicrous yet meaningful.  
Even a nightmare is but the inner self  
Knocking on the door of consciousness,  
Demanding to be heard.

There is nothing nightmarish about parades.  
They have always delighted me:

The circus parade--

Blaring band, clowns with grease-smeared faces and big feet,  
Elephants locked together in slow processional symphony;

The small town parade--

High school band, notes both blue and otherwise, but wonderful,  
Dignitaries on horseback, queen and her attendants in convertibles;

The military parade--

Precise marching, roll of drums, commands, execution of commands,  
Display of colors, national anthem, trooping the line--

Parades have always delighted me.

But the parade I dreamed about one night--  
The night I resigned from the human race--  
Was not delightful at all.

It was far different

From any I had ever seen.

I say that was no ordinary parade,

For before me that night

The whole human race, past, present and future

Passed in revue.

But the yesterdays, todays and tomorrows were all intertwined.

This parade did not start with Adam.

May I invite you into my dream?  
Will you sit, as I sat,  
Before the second-story window  
And watch this strange procession  
Coming down Main Street of my home town?  
Will you open the window a little more,  
And hear, as well as see, this parade?

In the distance I heard a rumble like thunder,  
But unlike thunder, it was in rhythm--  
A pulsating, "Thrud, Thrud, Thrud, Thrud,"  
Unlike any sound I had ever heard.  
"Thrud, THRUD, THRUD, THRUD,"  
The sound grew louder, much louder,  
But I could not see the source.  
I saw only a cloud, a black foreboding thing--  
That cloud was dust!--  
A dust cloud bigger than that of Jehu's chariot.  
And yes, I had heard the sound before--  
Marching feet striking the pavement;  
There must be thousands of them.  
Together they struck the pavement  
A cacophonic "THRUD, THRUD, THRUD, THRUD."  
With each "Thrud,"  
The buildings heaved in awful rhythm;  
But still I could see only the cloud.  
It came ever closer, until

Out of the cloud emerged a vehicle,  
An awesome thing as wide as the street,  
So long I could not see the end of it.  
It moved slowly, irrepressibly,  
Gathering everything in its path  
Like a train with a huge cow-catcher,  
Casting objects on either side.  
The crowds, in hushed frenzy,  
Flattened themselves against the buildings.  
I drew back from my window to keep  
The grotesque thing from scraping me as it passed.

Inscribed in multi-colored letters, six feet high,  
And at my eye level, were the words,  
THOU SHALT COVET.

Looking below the huge words I saw  
Scenes depicted by life-sized puppets  
On wide, wide cinemascope stages.



The first scene was a village with four churches,  
The people engaged in worship,  
The minister of one going busily  
To the doorways of the others, saying,  
"Come, join my church;  
We are right; you are wrong.  
If you join my church, you'll go to heaven;  
If you don't, you'll go to hell."  
Hundreds went about their business  
Outside the churches  
Completely oblivious to them,  
And the churches to the hundreds.

Another scene, noisy, dimly lit,  
Showed hundreds of dead  
Strewn along the streets of Budapest,  
Russian Tanks, engines idling,  
While Krushchev, vodka glass in hand,  
Proposed a toast:  
"To you, our Hungarian friends,  
Whom we love so much  
That we could not allow you to hurt yourselves."

The awesome vehicle moved steadily on,  
And a new scene came into view:  
In the slums of a large city  
A wealthy owner of tenement houses  
Whines to a tenant,  
"Okay, so your roof leaks,  
Your toilet don't work,  
Your light switch ain't any good,  
The furnace is on the bum  
And your kids're cold.  
Whaddaya want for seventy bucks a month--  
The Waldorf Astoria?"

The fourth scene:  
Two people--a man, a woman.  
They are standing at a bar.  
The man winks slyly as he speaks:  
"So what if you're married?  
What your old man in Korea  
Don't know won't hurt 'im.  
You just might find me  
A nicer dish than him anyway."

The "THRUD, THRUD, THRUD, THRUD"  
Had become deafening by now,  
As the rear wheels of 'Thou Shalt Covet' passed.  
Then thousands of ragged, sunken-cheeked people  
Of every color and nationality trudged by  
With a "THRUD, THRUD, thrud, thrud."  
I winced as I saw that  
There was no laughing or joking,  
Even among the children.

\* \* \* \* \*

After an endless procession of beaten people,  
Another vehicle approached,  
Much smaller than the first.  
Across the top of it were the words  
THOU SHALT GRASP.  
This vehicle had only two stages, two scenes.  
It had dollars, pounds, francs, marks,  
Pesos and yen glued on tentatively  
So that they fluttered in the breeze.  
On the first stage were two bearded men,  
Dressed in first century tunics.  
"What will you give me," the first man whispered,  
"If I deliver him to you?  
Twenty pieces, huh?  
Can you up it to thirty? Good.  
Then, the man I kiss is your man."  
And to himself,  
"Hmnn, thirty pieces of silver!  
What I can't do with all this money!"

I wept as I said to myself, "Can anyone be that low?  
Can a man love money more than his own decency?"

The second scene showed a well-dressed man  
of forty.  
The calendar on the wall read January 1945.  
The man said to his wife,  
"Dearest, if this war goes on two more years,  
We'll be rich. Rich! Do you hear?"  
Looking more closely, I knew that  
I had seen the man many times,  
He looked like me.  
I hated him.

"Thrud, Thrud, THRUD, THRUD," and there followed  
A solemn procession of the dead of many wars,  
Who had died because somebody was greedy.  
"Oh God!" I pleaded, "Please don't let it happen again!"

\* \* \* \* \*

Suddenly another huge vehicle arrived.  
Imprinted on it in blood in many places  
Was the phrase  
THOU SHALL HATE.

The vehicle was a mile long,  
Had one continuous stage on which live actors  
Depicted the hate scenes of the aeons:  
The amphitheater in Rome,  
Where fierce lions devoured real Christians,  
While thousands looked on amused;

The Inquisition,  
Where scores died several deaths each  
before the big one,  
Because they dared disagree with a system;  
The Indian wars, where mutual hatred  
Of new and old Americans  
Caused the beginning of the end  
For a whole race of people;

The War Between the States,  
With neighbors fighting neighbors,  
Relatives fighting relatives,  
And hatred so fierce  
That a hundred years would not heal the scars;

And then a stinging stench rose to high heaven--  
A horrible odor coming from the ovens of Dachau,  
As millions of Jews were cremated alive  
Before my very eyes, just because they were Jews;

American cities where words like  
Wop, Kike, Nigger, Kraut,  
Haoile, Spik, Bohunk and Gook  
Abounded in uttered and unuttered hatred.

All on one fantastic stage they came--

Poison gas,  
Jelly bombs,  
Atom bombs,  
Hydrogen bombs,  
I C B Ms,  
Sputniks,  
Explorers,  
Vanguards,  
Pioneers,  
Luniks,  
World Wars  
One,  
TWO,

T H R E E,  
F O U R ,  
F I V E ,

"NO!!" I screamed at the top of my lungs.  
"GOD, I QUIT! I'M THROUGH! I WANT OUT!!  
I RESIGN FROM THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE!!!!"  
My eyes had seen enough; they were blind.  
All I could hear was  
The mighty THRUD of many feet--  
Then an awful silence.

"What's happened?" I implored.  
"The first parade is over," a man said,  
"But another one is coming."  
"Another parade?" I asked.  
"Yes," he said, "Another."

Then a miracle happened.  
My sight came back  
As suddenly as it had gone.  
I saw a second procession approaching.  
This time there was no THRUD,  
This time there was no cloud of dust,  
This time the crowd stayed in place,  
This time there were no vehicles,  
But a simple procession of horsemen.

Here came the first one.  
I had seen him before--  
Tall, lean, bearded,  
Legs dangling below the stirrups.  
"This nation cannot exist  
Half slave and half free,"  
He said simply.

Some fifty yards behind  
Came a second horseman,  
Dressed in clericals.  
He seemed to be praying:  
"For it is in giving that we receive,  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
And it is in dying  
That we are born to eternal life."  
I nodded my head in assent as  
The Assisian rode by.



Then came a host of others, one by one,  
Some speaking and some not--

Sister Kenny, Jonas Salk;  
Gautama, Mohammed;  
Moses, Paul;  
Luther, Wesley;  
Bach, Beethoven;  
Galileo, Newton;  
Darwin, Freud;  
Spurgeon, Fosdick;  
DaVinci, Michelangelo;  
Plato, Kierkegaard;  
Shakespeare, Whitman;  
Augustine, Damien;  
Franklin, Wilson;  
Ghandi, Schweitzer--

And still they came,  
Great persons of history,  
One at a time,  
Without pomp,  
Without ceremony.

Following these came  
A mighty host of unknown greats,  
Those whose names  
History had forgotten to record.  
Their faces were wonderfully bright  
With faith, courage, hope and joy.

Finally He arrived,  
In a simple white robe,  
Riding on a donkey.  
The crowd grew deathly quiet.  
"Peace I leave with you;  
My peace I give unto you.  
Not as the world gives  
Give I unto you."

The parade was over.

"God, oh God," I cried,  
"Thou Who didst create me,  
And breathed into me  
The breath of life;  
Forgive me my blasphemy.  
Make me a very real part  
Of the human race--

One who will do one man's share  
In healing the woes of humanity.  
Make me Thine instrument."

I fancied I heard in the distance  
A still, small voice, which said:  
"Granted, my son. Granted."

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## SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE DISCIPLES

Charles Otis Lee  
Jackson, Mississippi

Speaking of Alexander Campbell, I have recently been thinking of him which, to me, is in somewhat of a new light. Campbell's "Sermon on the Law" is the key.

As far as I know, the fact that Alexander Campbell was a thorough-going legalist is rather well established. His famous Sermon on the Law was not a sermon against legalism, but rather against the authority of the Old Testament in relation to the ongoing of the Church. To him a new law had been established which repealed the statutes and ordinances of the Old Testament in their entirety. To him "All arguments drawn from the Hebrew law in regard to"--present church practices--"are irrelevant and immaterial." (1). Alexander's stand in this respect seems also to have been the convictions of the other "Horsemen" of the Restoration movement. They believed that the New Testament contained within itself all the rules and regulations necessary for the operation of the church.

Thus in his Sermon on the Law, Mr. Campbell seems to have completely missed the central point in Paul's argument in his letters to the Galatians and later to the Romans. Paul was arguing against the ability of law as law to bring salvation. To him salvation could come only through the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ --a vitally different concept.

With the rejection of the Old Testament and the espousal of the New Testament as our one, only and complete authority, the Old Testament became virtually an unknown book to our Brotherhood. We were "New Testament" Christians. Even for the purposes of Scripture the Old Testament was, at best, only second class. As such our Brotherhood was greatly impoverished religiously by such rejection.

Yet, in the long run our fore-fathers served us well in this connection. Through the years we had been saved from the fanatical approach toward an understanding of the Old Testament which was

then and still is prevalent in numerous denominations. Accordingly, when the historical method of studying the Old Testament began to gain ground we could become a part without having to undo a lot of inhibitions which dogged the footsteps of students from other denominations. I remember well the thrilling experiences which were mine in being able to set in Dr. J. M. Smith's classes at the University of Chicago while he "opened up to us the Scriptures." From that, and in somewhat the same manner, I have learned to interpret--and better interpret, I believe--the messages of the various writers of the New Testament. In my opinion our great need today is to strive to implement the salient principles of real Biblical research into the membership of the Church as a whole.

Neither religion as a whole nor the Church in particular has been "the same, yesterday, today and forever." The Old Testament did not make the Jewish faith, but the Jews through constant borrowing from existing concepts outside and inside Palestine through the centuries, and through constant revisions made the Old Testament--especially the Pentateuch--what we have it today. The same is true of the New Testament--it did not make the Church, but the Church made the New Testament. Constant battles were fought in the developing of the faith. First, it was the question as to whether the new movement was to be just another sect within Judaism, or cosmopolitan. Then, as the church moved out into the Gentile world it met up with Greek philosophy, the Roman yen and genius for organization, and the sacramentalism of the mystery cults which surrounded the Mediterranean basin. It had to pass through the ebb-tide of a dying eschatological hope and the whole movement was saved only by the genius of the developing Catholic faith to switch to new emphases.

We Disciples have prided ourselves on being a "Bible people." I hope we continue to be such, but not the kind of Bible people who go to the scriptures with a priori conceptions and seek confirmation for such beliefs through proof-texts sometimes wonderfully adjusted and, at times, quite out of context. I hope we will be the kind of Bible people who will want to see how the Bible really came into being, from whence the various concepts came and how they were moulded into the many high concepts of religious faith found--as our own forefathers would say--"in the Old Book." Then, and only then can we begin to make constructive judgments and work out proposals for the meeting of our many present problems--religious, governmental, social, etc., etc., etc.

- (1). P 166 "The Disciples of Christ--a History"--Garrison & DeGroot

## BETWEEN ANARCHY AND HIERARCHY

George G. Beazley, Jr.  
First Christian Church, Bartlesville, Oklahoma

### I.

The history of most religious movements is the journey from a creative response with little form to a tired formalism with little joy. In the beginning is the passionate personality caught up in creativity as he reacts against the preceding formalism of the faith. In the ending is the casuistic schoolmaster educating men in the minutiae of a system built to preserve and make available to minds that never wonder the insights which the founder discovered with joy and awe. During the first period, a kind of creative anarchy reigns, as lesser men are kindled by the creative fire that a prophet has kindled and themselves blaze with new conflagrations, which they would never have experienced if someone greater than they had not lighted the flame. During the last period, the fire is carefully housed in a furnace, and men have its heat channeled to them only by carefully regulated ducts, while fire drills have been carefully taught, so that the blaze may be quickly extinguished when it gets out of control.

In the history of Christianity this cycle has been repeated many times. No doubt it will go on repeating itself until the consummation of the ages, when the Lord of time shall send his vision to all men and shall write his law on the hearts of all those eager to know how to combine prophetic passion with the routine of daily living.

It was thus Christianity began. The new wine that fermented in Jesus' response to God burst the old wineskins of Pharisaic Judaism. The earthly Jesus was extinguished, as a fire too much out of control, but the risen Lord of the church, however, continued to set fires in the lives of men. The early pages of the Acts of the Apostles have all the excitement and creativity and all of the anarchy that are usually engendered in men possessed with a functifying idea. When it seemed that some regularity in administration was necessary, the apostles appointed seven deacons, saying "We can't take time off from this exciting business to administrate rules." But at least two of the administrators could not be content to regulate. Stephen got himself stoned, but not for failing to regulate tables for Hellenistic widows. Men may be dismissed for errors in administration. They are seldom martyred for them. Philip got so excited over these creative seeds that he sowed them in Samaria and in the heart of an Ethiopian eunuch. There is no record he ever filed a report on the condition of Hellenistic widows or suggested machinery by which more justice could be obtained in the distribution of their food. It was administrative anarchy, but who would expect flames that fell from heaven to be content to burn on quiet and well regulated hearths.



Of course, not all apostles are Peters or Johns; not all appointed administrators Phillips or Stephens. The larger, plodding mass always wants the divine creativity reduced to a few simple rules that can be taught and learned, so that all men may know how to handle their fretting lives. A raging fire is a glorious thing, but it consumes more fuel than most men can supply, and it can easily become disastrous. So James, the brother of the Lord, appears. The very reason for choosing him to head the community suggests the triumph of hierarchal order over anarchical creativity. He is the legal successor in the Messianic line, the blood brother of the one whose blood was spilt because his creativity would not yield to community control. And in the quiet but persistent way of all the legally minded, he sets about regulating, preserving and making respectable and teachable the insights of his gifted brother. Of course, much that caused Jesus to be recognized as the Christ was lost in this process, but you cannot expect the tissues of a community, even the elect community of the church, to be able to bear the strain exerted by a wine that continues to ferment indefinitely. Our last glimpse of the church at Jerusalem in this early period is James urging Paul to pay the expenses of four men under vows and to be purified in the temple, that the caretakers of formalism might know that Paul was not, as some said him to be, a new incendiary like Jesus.

Yet the whole career of Paul had shown that he was a new passionate rebel like his master, that he could provide more fuel for the blaze than anyone since his Lord had first kindled it. The torrential Greek of his letters, which defies the formalism of grammar, bespeaks another voyager not content with a well charted sea. When the creative anarchy becomes a discreative confusion, as at Corinth, he knows how to bring it back under control by the force of his personality and by the quieting effect of his well trained lieutenants like Titus. But he can never be content to cultivate long the field he has planted, and he is so allergic to records that he cannot even remember whom he has baptized.

It is thus the New Testament starts, with its most creative literature, the genuine letters of Paul. It ends with the Pastoral Epistles, where only a few genuine and fragmentary notes of Paul occasionally break through that structure of careful regulation, which some follower has formed as the setting for them. Here we find no hymns to love as in I Corinthians, no creative theology rooted in an awareness of man's existential situation as in Romans, no outbursts in behalf of Christian freedom as in Galatians. Here is good advice about appointing officers, rules to protect against heresy, encomium on the antiquity of the well-regulated faith. The fire has been carefully regulated. The anarchy is being reduced to the beginnings of hierarchy.

There are many such stories in the history of the Christian church. The Reformation is another. It starts with the full-blooded Luther making Wittenberg's church door resound with the blows of a hammer struck by an indignant prophet. It ends in the

well-regulated orthodoxy of Protestant Scholasticism, trying to make justification by faith, the priesthood of all believers, and divine election rational. It starts with the discovery of the freshness of the Greek New Testament and with the desire to get the explosive words into the vernacular of every nation, so that the plowboy may be filled with the new wine of the gospel. It ends with theories of the literal inspiration of the scripture and the effort to harmonize the differences which Luther had never cared to conceal.

This cycle repeats itself once more in the beginnings of our movement. Cane Ridge is full of the divine fire. It is the anarchical Spirit again pouring itself out on the sons of men. This Spirit reduced to nothingness the carefully worked out distinctions between Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians. Barton W. Stone saw and rejoiced. He never forgot that vision, and he continued to believe that no amount of laws, logically deduced from literature of the New Testament, could make up for the absence of a fiery loyalty to Christ which made laws superfluous in the life of the believer.

Thomas Campbell felt it too when he dispensed with Presbyterian regulations about the Lord's table and, in a burst of compassion for God's divided flock, invited all to the Lord's table. The divine fire flowed from his pen as he wrote another declaration of freedom under the creative insight that the church was essentially and intentionally one.

The rage that comes from God and knows no regulation came into Alexander Campbell's heart as he flung down that token of formalism at the Lord's Table and stalked in fury from a church that would set limits to the grace and love that God had poured out in the cross of Jesus Christ. The divine fire that will not be regulated glowed from the page on which he penned "Let us make the doors of the church as wide as the gates of heaven."

It filled the heart of Walter Scott as he sought to evangelize the Western Reserve. It had already spoken to his rebellious Scotch heart, as he galloped through the Greek New Testament and saw a wild gospel unlike the tame well-regulated ones he had heard from the pulpits of his day.

Hardly had the divine anarchy begun, however, before formalism began to creep in. Sometimes the very minds that had been consumed by the raging fire built the furnaces where it was to be regulated. Thomas Campbell could not be content with essentially and intentionally one. He had to add "constitutionally" with its invitation to casuistic legalism. The Alexander Campbell who had wanted to widen the doors of the church began to narrow them again with his new law and the restoration of an imaginary polity, which that turbulent church of the New Testament had never possessed. It is no accident that texts from Matthew and Acts became numerous, and Paul's doctrine of faith, the church, and the Spirit were reduced to

shadows of their real selves. Scott could soon begin to believe that a convenient five point sermon outline was the rule of entrance into the early church, despite the fact that a divine variety was evident in the descriptions of conversions in the Acts of the Apostles.

Some have said that without the organizing and regulating genius of Alexander Campbell, the Christian movement of Stone would have lost itself in complete formlessness. Perhaps this is so. Maybe there have to be Jameses and men like the author of the Pastorals. Maybe there have to be Restorationists and Orthodox theologians. But whenever these become the rule, there have to be new Pauls and new Luthers.

## II.

The history of our movements from its beginnings to the eighteen-seventies and eighties is the march from the anarchy of passionate creativity to the hierarchy of well-regulated formalism. This may be heresy against orthodox Discipleism but it is true. No more proof should be needed than the contrast of the joy of the early days of glorious unity which Stone describes with the jangle of contention by those men who were writing articles on the doorplate given to Isaac Errett by his friends. Our membership during that period grew by leaps and bounds, but in the effort to reduce the dreams of our fathers into a formula that could be easily taught, we lost our creativity and our joy.

When renewal came, it came, as it had come for Stone and the Campbells, when we met in receptive creativity Christians of different viewpoints from our own. Let us never forget that it was at Cane Ridge where Baptists, Methodists and Presbyterians worked together in creative interpenetration that Stone's dream was born. Let us never forget that it was on the Pennsylvania frontier where Presbyterians of differing brands were gathering together that Thomas Campbell saw that the church was essentially one. Let us never forget that it was in the meetings of the followers of the Haldanes in Edinburgh and in the experience of the creative interchange of new theological ideas in the university that Alexander Campbell began to react deeply against the formulations of the Presbyterian Church of his day.

Once again it was when our young men of the last quarter of the nineteenth century began to study in Yale and return to Chicago that the cross-fertilization came about that produced a new burst of creative energy among our people. For Willett, Ainslie, Ames, Morrison, and Garrison have been to the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) in the twentieth century what Stone, the Campbells and Scott were to them in the nineteenth century. These five, of course, were not all. There were many more in this period, just as today our historians are discovering neglected leaders beside the big four in our early days. These new pioneers shattered the formalism into which we had congealed at the close of the nineteenth century as the big four had shattered the formalism into which the

Presbyterians of the frontier had congealed at the beginning of that century. It was their love of the old wineskins that created the Independents in that period. It was the desire for new wine on the part of the bulk of our leadership that brought the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) out of sectarianism and back into ecumenicity.

Half a century and more has elapsed since the beginning of that last creative burst. Today we are facing again the old problem with which the church must wrestle over and over again. How are we to keep free enough not to smother the new creativity with which we may be blessed, while maintaining enough form to enable us to responsibly act as a brotherhood, both for our internal good and that we may play our particular part in ecumenical circles. How are we to leave opportunities for the acceptance of the new insights that our more venturesome minds will discover, and yet fit our faith into a curriculum that can be taught to those whose minds can accept only a well ordered morality and a theology limited to relatively simple concepts? How are we to produce a ministry through whose spirits will blow the ecumenical winds of God and call forth prophetic utterances, and yet see that we do not ordain screwballs who use freedom as an excuse for irresponsible conduct toward their own congregations and toward the brotherhood at large?

It is this basic problem and its ramifications that the officers of your Campbell Institute have chosen as the theme for our discussions during 1960. We hope that you will find it stimulating and relevant. We trust you will argue it avidly in your state meetings and in your private conversations, that you will write your reactions to it and let us print them in The Scroll, that you will encourage your friends who are not members of the Institute to become part of it and join in the discussion, and that you will gather en masse for the discussion of this theme at the International Convention at Louisville.

It is our feeling there are three major problems involved in this issue, so we have asked the convention to allow us three post sessions. We intend to present a panel on each of these problems on one of these evenings.

### III.

The first of the three problems which the Campbell Institute plans to discuss during 1960 is the rise in our brotherhood of the Independent faction and its relation to the main body of the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ), which, in the discussion of this problem, is usually given the title "The Cooperatives."

The very titles by which we distinguish these two groups shows the confusion in most people's minds in regard to this issue. The titles seem to indicate that there is something within the brotherhood from which one portion of our membership seeks to be independent and with which the other portion, the majority of our churches, wish to cooperate, and that this is the basic issue between them.



If most people were asked what this "something" is, they would probably reply the United Christian Missionary Society, which the Independents lovingly designate U. C. Mess, using the old technique of the label to prevent and pervert a thoughtful consideration of the problem.

Even the Independents can scarcely claim that they desire to be independent of all missionary organization any longer, since they form evangelistic associations and set goals for the number of competing churches they hope to establish in town in which, as they express it, "there are no loyal New Testament Churches." And while the main body has never denied that they feel cooperation through responsible agencies, created by the brotherhood as a whole and reporting to them through the International Convention of Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ), is the most orderly, efficient, and democratic way of handling those tasks too large for the local church, they have consistently defended the freedom of the local church to govern itself in matters of polity and doctrine and to include within its membership Christians of widely differing theological views.

It is quite true that the conflict over the management of missions has been the most frequently discussed issue growing out of this division among us. It is now, however, the basic issue. This becomes evident when one reads the attacks of the Independent factions on the main body of the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) or on a particular missionary, church, or minister within this main body. When the attack is made, it always comes from the assumption that there is a well defined and easily determined set of theological rules which have been broken by the United Christian Missionary Society, or by a particular seminary, church, or minister and that by the breaking of this set of rules they have proven themselves to be no longer worthy to remain within the brotherhood and should be chased out. It should be obvious that this is what the terms "loyal" and "not loyal" mean to the Independent faction. A less violent but somewhat similar group within the main body veer toward this position when they use the terms "traditional" and "not traditional", even though they would not engage in the excommunication of those not following the set of rules which the Independents recommend.

Actually the Independents belong to that larger group within Christendom which believe that the cement which brings a denomination together is basically doctrinal and that a creed (written or unwritten) is necessary to test the right of individual ministers, seminaries, or agencies to remain within the denomination. Of course, the Independents abhor the word "creed", but they do not hesitate to draw up lists of questions by which ministers can be tested which is only the reality without the name. They proclaim in their sermons and their advertising that they are "non-denominational", but what they mean by this is that they are the one true, apostolic, primitive church, while all those differing from them are, in varying degrees, apostate. When stated in this way, it is evident that the basic concept of the Independents of the way in which differing

opinions on matters of doctrine and polity are to be handled is very similar to that of the Roman Catholic Church. The essential difference is only that the Roman Church, with its rigid consistency, has vested the authority for determining the doctrine and polity in the hands of one man, the pope, while among the Independents there are many popes, agreeing generally, but at odds on some minor points.

That the above paragraph is not a caricature or an attempt to damn by association can be easily seen when we ask ourselves what are the main objections which the Independents raise to the agencies, seminaries, publications, or ministers whom they attack? It is always that they have departed from the true faith by teaching doctrines or by engaging in practices that are not taught in the New Testament and which are, therefore, forbidden to the New Testament Church. This, of course, assumes that the New Testament Church had a well defined body of doctrine and polity which was observed in all places, at all times, and that the writings contained in its twenty-seven books are literally inspired and are in the nature of a legal constitution from which particular applications can be deduced. It is also assumed that these doctrines and this polity are so clearly taught that there can be no reasonable doubt about their nature, and that when an agency, seminary, church, or minister departs from them, they are doing so purely out of ignorance or out of a perverted desire to impart a false theology into a group of the churches that should, as they say, "remain true to the Bible."

It should further be observed that the polities and doctrines to which the Independents most violently object are those which recognize the status of other denominations and treat them as a real part of the body of Christ. Thus the attack on the United Christian Missionary Society grew mainly out of the willingness of this agency to cooperate with other groups in comity agreements in the mission field and in the fear that they were receiving into our mission churches as members persons from churches that did not practice immersion. For this reason they have created independent missionaries of their own, whom, by rigid financial control, they could prevent from engaging in these practices. The attack on certain seminaries was primarily concerned with the failure of those seminaries to insist that there was one, consistent, easily recognized pattern of polity and doctrine in the New Testament and their failure to teach this mythical pattern. It was for this reason that they objected to the use of the critical methods of biblical study, which were developed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and are accepted by most creative biblical scholarship. These studies proved the Bible to be a living book, mediating the revelation of God in Jesus Christ to us, not a carefully worded legal constitution, unaffected by history, or by the human beings who penned it. The Independents did not care to have biblical studies ever progress beyond the Christian System of Alexander Campbell, the New Commentary on Acts of Apostles by McGarvey, or The Divine Scheme of Redemption of Milligan. Since the College of the Bible at Lexington, Kentucky was the first of our seminaries to become interested in and use the

results of modern biblical scholarship (The Disciples Divinity House at the University of Chicago had espoused the pattern about two decades earlier but the Independents considered it only a new radical experiment, not one of our own seminaries), it was for many years the whipping boy of The Christian Standard. To combat this the Independents formed a group of "Bible Schools", beginning with Cincinnati and steadily increasing in number. These carefully insulated themselves from all secular learning, that might cause any doubt of their basic proposition, and rejected all biblical scholarship that did not agree with their certainty that they, and they alone, understood the nature, doctrine and polity of the New Testament Church.

It is not hard to see why the National Council of Churches or the World Council of Churches would be anathema to this group. These Councils recognize the Christian nature of all the cooperating churches and assume that only when we pool our insights can we more fully find the truth God reveals to us, that only when we cooperate, can we effectively preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to those who have not heard. To a group convinced that it alone has the true doctrine and polity, such cooperation, with its comity agreements on the mission field and in the large cities, is unthinkable. None of those churches in America which believe that they alone are the true church would go into these councils, and when the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ), through its International Convention, became a part of these bodies, the Independents had another reason to bear a grudge toward the Cooperatives. Naturally any translation of the Bible produced under the auspices of such organizations and by scholars trained in the new biblical learning and unwilling to concede that a rigid scheme of doctrine and polity could be easily seen in the New Testament were not acceptable to this group.

Churches and ministers came under fire because of their support of such agencies and their willingness to accept modern biblical and secular learning. However, the unpardonable sin of some of these churches and ministers was their willingness to accept as members Christians from churches that did not practice their form of baptism, for they held that it is utterly inconsistent to include persons at the Lord's table and then deny them admission to membership in the congregation without rebaptism. The Standard Publishing Company became more and more the spokesman for these objections. The Independents rejected the Christian Board of Publication, since its relation with inter-denominational agencies was friendly and since it sought to incorporate into its church school materials the discoveries in technique and in biblical study that had come to be generally accepted by the scholarly world.

Unfortunately these basic issues between the Independents and the main body of the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) are not clearly understood. Instead of seeing the conflict as an issue between a group who believes in rigid adherence to a well defined system of doctrine and policy and a group that allows freedom

in all matters of doctrine and policy and requires only acceptance of Jesus as Christ and Lord, allowing this loyalty and the command to love to hold the church together, many assume that the problem lies merely in differences in details, which can be compromised and thus the rupture healed. It is this latter view that has prompted the so-called Consultations on Internal Unity that have been held in some states. Some ministers and churches have seen the issue as merely their relationship to the missionary society of their state and their support of the national agencies. Not having objected to the reason for the rejection of these agencies by the Independents, these Cooperatives attempt to defend this support purely on the basis of efficiency and sometimes cling to a theology which is hardly distinguishable from that of the Independents whom they are opposing. Often they are forced into a kind of Christian schizophrenia where they accept Presbyterian, Methodists and Congregationals as sincere Christians, cooperate with them in missionary endeavor, and read their theologians and biblical scholars with appreciation and at least as much acceptance as they accord their own, yet still cling to the idea that there is a rigid pattern of doctrine in the New Testament and stretch the word doctrine until it actually includes polity also. Thus they offer unity and cooperation with one hand and withdraw it with the other. Often this failure to be consistent leads even the brotherhood agencies into ludicrous action. Thus on its dust jacket the Christian Board of Publication describes Milligan's The Divine Scheme of Redemption not as an interesting document illustrating a particular period of our history but as "a clear exposition and defense of the 'scheme of redemption' as it is revealed and taught in the Holy Scriptures", despite the fact that the acceptance of the position of this book's thesis would cause the rejection of the principles on which the Christian Board of Publication and the United Christian Missionary Society exist.

In a decade when we shall undoubtedly be considering again our part in the ecumenical movements of our day and accepting, rejecting or postponing the invitation of the United Church of Christ to become a part of this effort for Christian unity, it is very important that the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) understand the basic issues that are causing internal disunity and that its ministers and lay people choose either the way of an unwritten creedalism or the liberty which our forefathers set out to find for the church. Though an effort has been made here to set forth the basic issues and point out some of the confusions and complexities, only open discussion between differing viewpoints can illuminate all of the problems involved. This is one of the things which The Campbell Institute hopes to promote in 1960.

#### IV.

Closely related to this problem of internal unity is the matter of the education and the ordination of the ministry. How shall ordination take place? Who shall do it? How can we insure that those who are ordained are not mere sectarians, but true ministers of the body of Christ? Who shall examine the candidates, or



shall they be examined at all? On what shall they be examined-- education, loyalty to agencies, theological positions? How can we prevent any commission on the ministry from becoming an examining presbytery? Is the minister responsible to God alone, to the church he is serving, or to the brotherhood of which he is a part? If he is responsible to all of these, does his individual conscience, the local church he is serving or the brotherhood determine the type of minister which he should be? How shall he be selected, trained or disciplined? All these knotty problems call for consideration lest we drift into a policy we have not intended.

While we have always had these problems with us, they have been augmented both by our efforts to deal with the Independent sect within us and by our relation with the ecumenical movement, where we find that other churches with a well-defined ministry ask embarrassing questions about our own. An increasing number of sincere laymen and ministers within our brotherhood would greatly curtail some of our hard-earned freedoms if, by so doing, they could thwart the effort of the Independents to take over churches that are now a part of the major body of the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ). On the other hand, some Independents lobby for a delegate convention with rigid control of the churches and the ministers, hoping to capture it and exclude those ministers and churches whom they condemn as not true to the pattern of the New Testament Church.

It seems almost inevitable that in the next few decades we shall curtail our liberty of action, which has issued in license more often than we like to think. Our greatest danger is that in so doing we may create centers of power that will fall into the hands of persons that may be quite as irresponsible as the mavericks they seek to corral.

It is a pattern too prevalent to be accidental that censorships which set out to control a literary pornography generally end in condemning great but controversial works of art, while losing interest in the trash that is too worthless to call any attention to itself. It is the nature of greatness that it becomes a cynosure for all eyes and provokes controversy. Our past history should warn us that it is the Ames, the Morrisons, the Garrisons, and the Ainslies who are the targets at which the mediocre let fly their darts. The heretics of Podunk seldom arouse the ire of any commission.

Thus when we create commissions to examine candidates, we want to hedge about their freedom to inquire with statements of God-given freedoms that must be respected and give any harassed candidate some supreme commission to which he can appeal if he feels these freedoms have been violated. If we fail to do this, we shall merely insure the triumph of mediocrity in the ministry and reinforce the present tendency to think that the ideal minister is the one who attains organizational "success" and never gets into controversy.

To discuss the complexities involved in this thorny problem of how to create a responsible ministry that will yet be pioneering is the second issue which The Campbell Institute hopes to hold up to our brotherhood in 1960.

## V.

Closely allied to the preceding two problems is the matter of brotherhood structure. The International Convention of Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) meeting in Denver in August 28-September 2, 1959, received a report from the Board of Directors of the International Convention stating, "It is the present intent of the Board of Directors to bring to the Assembly of the International Convention when it meets in Louisville, Kentucky, a recommendation calling for the creation of a representative Commission on Brotherhood Structure. This recommendation will be detailed as to how such a commission shall be structured, what its functions are to be and how it shall operate so as to secure the widest possible Brotherhood participation." At the meeting in Louisville, October 21-26, 1960, we shall be presented with this recommendation and shall vote upon it. It seems highly probable that such a commission will be created. Its task will not be an easy one.

Our membership has always been characterized by its diversity. Almost everyone among the Cooperative group is agreed that we need a more responsible structure. In this view a larger number of Independents than one might expect heartily join. However, when it comes to the matter of what constitutes a more responsible structure, the familiar diversity reaches mammoth proportions.

Some feel we need a statement of our beliefs. The more bold will even define this as a creed. Most of the main body will say that this must not be used as a test of fellowship. The Independents seem less concerned about this danger, recognizing that this has always been the reason for and use of creeds. Some, prizing freedom as our supreme heritage from the past but agreeing with the Independents as to the nature and normal use of such a statement, feel that to accept any official statement of faith is to court a relapse into the very situation whose errors brought the protest and program of our fathers into existence.

The delegate convention is a form of structure for which there is a rising sentiment. Despite the fact that previous attempts to make this form work among our churches has heretofore ended in a fiasco, many feel another effort to establish this form needs to be attempted. The reasons given for desiring a delegate convention vary. Some feel that we must be able to speak with more authority as a group. They are particularly sensitive to our inability to speak with power on social issues. Others feel that the appointing of delegates would give more sense of responsibility both to the churches that appoint and to the delegates that are

appointed. Still others feel that, unless a delegate convention can be formed, we can give no responsible answers to those who bring before us opportunities for organic unity with the Church Universal or some portion of it. The problem of how a mass meeting can decide to restructure itself into a delegate convention is itself a formidable one, even should such a proposal meet with a majority response.

Much of our traditional structure was determined by the American frontier. Sociologically our churches were rural. Now, like all of America, we have rapidly become urbanized. The frontier and much of its spirit has disappeared forever. Indeed, much of the attraction of the Independent position to some of our membership is the appeal to a nostalgic ruralism, with its effort to return to the "good old days" that are now gone forever. How does a church movement rooted sociologically in the American frontier and philosophically in Enlightenment adapt itself to being the seventh largest Protestant denomination in an America that has become urban and industrial and in a world where existentialism has become the dominant philosophy? How does a group of people accustomed by their heritage to think of the church as a local congregation simply ruled by mass votes and by directly responsible elders and deacons deal with an ecumenical movement where wide diversity of policy creates problems of church unity which can be shrugged aside only at vast peril to an embattled Christendom in a post-Christian culture? How can the ministry of a group who were convinced that the New Testament was a simple and straight-forward book, legislating doctrine and policy for the church in all life's situations, adjust itself to a Biblical scholarship where all problems are complex and where all questions tend to find theological rootage? How can a movement with no real sense of the nature of historical time, some of whose leaders felt they could jump over eighteen centuries of history and restore, in the nineteenth century, the imagined pristine purity of the primitive church, find its place in a Christendom where the relativizing effect of history on all human concepts is axiomatic?

It is the recognition of the difficulty of answering these questions that has created a Panel of Scholars, a Commission on the Theology of Mission and other such groups for study. Restructure is not a simple process. More is involved than bringing order out of chaos. To explore the complexity of these problems and allow open discussion, dedicated to truth and freedom, to suggest answers is the third task to which The Campbell Institute looks forward as it enters its sixty-fourth year of existence.





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# THE SCROLL

The Journal of the Campbell Institute

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## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Dear Reader:

While my face is no longer the bright shade of red that suffused it when I sent you the Fall 1959 issue of The Scroll during the first months of 1960, it is still a strong shade of pink as I send you the Winter 1960 issue in April. I might paraphrase Robert Browning and say, "Ch to be in January, now that spring is here." By the Summer 1960 issue, I hope to be back on schedule and not desert it again.

Of course, if these issues are to reach your desk, those of you who are behind in your dues must send them to Paul Kennedy. Even with offset press the cost is much above that of the past, and without the traditional "two iron men" from each man, we can't put in print the interesting collection of articles that we are now amassing.

The present issue begins a series of articles by a group of our older leaders, whose long service among us enables them to write with deep penetration on signs of progress and development among the disciples to give us some analysis of the problems now before our people. The suggestion for this series came from Dr. Irvin Lunger, president of Transylvania College and a long-time member of the Campbell Institute. Your editor was most grateful for it. Originally, we had planned to print these essays as a single issue of The Scroll. However, the busy schedule of some of these "retired" (???) leaders of our brotherhood kept them from sending me their essays in time for this issue, so we are printing only two essays in this issue to whet your appetite for those that are to come.

Our third article is a paper read by Ralph G. Wilburn at the annual Pastors' Conference of the Disciples of Christ of Kentucky, convened at the College of the Bible, Lexington, January 11, 1960. This is too good a paper to be heard only by the ministers of one state, and Ralph has granted me permission to use it as an article in The Scroll. It deals in a practicable and understandable manner with a problem about which many of our ministers are thinging.

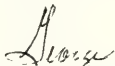
Richard Johnson, head resident at the Disciples Divinity House at the University of Chicago and a recent B.D. graduate at the College of the Bible, Lexington, Kentucky has written our fourth article. Originally it was a paper done for a class in New Testament. After reading it, I asked Dick to let me print it, and he was kind enough to let me do so. It is a truly scholarly exegesis of a difficult passage. It is my hope that other students who are doing this type of work will send their best papers to me for possible inclusion in our magazine. I feel that one of the duties of The Scroll is to encourage publication of worthy work by our scholars in training.



The final article is by your editor. I hope you will find it interesting. It is my conviction that the reading of the works of our contemporary greats in the literary field would give us a much better comprehension of the questions our civilization is asking. Only if we know these, can we relate God's event in Jesus Christ to our world.

Don't forget your "two iron men". We need them.

Yours for free discussion,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "George".

George G. Beazley, Jr.

## A BROTHERHOOD IN TRANSITION

William Clayton Bower\*  
Lexington, Kentucky.

The century and a half since the origin of the Disciple Movement has been one of profound intellectual and social change. This has been increasingly true since the beginning of the twentieth century, and is likely to be more so in the future, not only in the magnitude of these changes, but in their tempo. The effectiveness--even survival--of an institution or movement depends upon its capacity to adjust to these changed conditions and to meet, as Toynbee would say, the challenges which they present. Institutions or movements which fail to meet these challenges are doomed to become mere survivals or to lose their effective functioning as constructive forces in the contemporary world. Therefore the necessity of continuous reappraisal of purposes, organization, and procedures.

### I

The Disciples had their origin in the early nineteenth century in a reaction against sectarianism. To the founding fathers sectarianism was not only an unfortunate historical development of Protestantism, but a sin in that it contravened the intercessory prayer of Christ and rendered ineffective the persuasive witness of the church. There were two basic ideas in the origin of the Disciple movement. The primary one was a plea for the union of all Christians. It was not their idea to start another denomination but to propose a rallying ground to which all followers of Christ of whatever creed or polity could repair. It was this idea and hope which led them to adopt the oldest and most inclusive title, "Christian" or "Disciples of Christ." For them this title did not connote that they were the only Christians, but that they were Christians only.

The second idea was the proposal that as a means for accomplishing this end all followers of Christ should go back beyond all historic creeds and polities to the New Testament and restore the New Testament as the only rule of faith and practice and the New Testament church in its beliefs, ordinances, and way of life. Thus they proposed that there be no creed but Christ and in all matters of opinion complete liberty.

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there have been many changes, both intellectual and social. Modern science has given us revolutionary conceptions of nature, of man, and of the cosmos. Meanwhile, modern historical and biblical scholarship has

\*Professor Emeritus of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago.

given us a new understanding of the origin and nature of the Bible, of the character of the New Testament churches, of the development of the church, and of the evolution of Christian doctrine.

No less fundamental and rapid have been the social changes, both in the nation and throughout the world. These changes involve industrial, interracial, international, and intercultural relations. Increasingly states and regions have become one nation. Out of many races, cultures and nationalities one world has emerged.

Meantime, there has been a pronounced development in co-operation among the churches in local communities, in state and national Councils culminating in the World Council of Churches. In increasing instances there have been mergers of branches within denominations and of denominations themselves. Most significantly, there has emerged the concept of the ecumenical church embracing all faiths and polities within Christendom.

So, it turns out that at mid-twentieth century the Disciples are no longer a lone voice pleading for Christian unity. Ironically enough, they have in some instances been an obstacle to union by allowing the means to take precedence over the end.

## II

The fact that the Disciples have designated the sixties as "A Decade of Decision" is evidence that the leadership of the Brotherhood is aware of these changes, of the challenges which they present, and of the necessity of re-examining our position in relation to our origins and to contemporary movements in Christendom. Among the issues about which this rethinking centers some half-dozen crucial ones may be pointed out.

First, the reconstruction of Brotherhood polity. In the beginning the Disciples were extremely individualistic. The local congregation was wholly autonomous and recognized no central authority. Such co-operation as existed was entirely voluntary. In the early twentieth century there were churches within the Brotherhood which refused to co-operate in any common undertaking. By mid-century these non-co-operating churches withdrew to form an independent body known as the Churches of Christ which later split into two bodies. Conventions of the co-operating churches have been composed of individuals rather than delegates of the churches and possess no authority over the individual congregation.

Meantime, as common enterprises developed along with common relationships with other religious bodies and the community, the Brotherhood was consolidated into a corporate existence comparable to that of a denomination among denominations. Thus there has evolved a second level of church polity above that of the local churches. The original polity, or lack of it, made no adequate provision for this new level of corporate relations and responsibilities.

Consequently the Disciples are now faced with the need of developing a new corporate structure that will provide for these new intra-church and extra-church relations and responsibilities.

Second, there is the necessity of integrating the functions and relations of the various agencies within the Brotherhood. Historically, each of these agencies grew up to meet a particular need, with its own objectives, organization, personnel and program. As a result there has been much overlapping, competition, and omission. This duplication and competition has caused no little waste of personnel, effort, and money, together with inefficiency.

Obviously, the time has come for the leaders of these agencies to sit down together to analyze the needs for which the Brotherhood is responsible, to take stock of resources of personnel and finance, to define and allocate functions and responsibilities, and to provide for unmet needs. The result of such a rational procedure would be a well-rounded, balanced, and comprehensive program of purpose and action.

It is a matter of much significance and promise that a Council of Agencies has been set up and is at work on this problem.

Third, the need of developing the lay membership of the churches. This is, on the whole, a responsibility of the local church.

The Disciples began as a lay movement. Each member of the local church stood in immediate relation to God and shared equally in the privileges and responsibilities of the congregation.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the early Disciples were anti-clerical. They believed in a lay and unsalaried ministry. They rejected such ecclesiastical titles as "Reverend," "Father," or "Doctor" as smacking of Romanism. They looked askance at ordination, not only as being unnecessary in a lay organization, but as having the connotation of an ecclesiastical hierarchy.

The emphasis upon the development of the lay membership does not mean, as the early Disciples assumed, that a professional and trained leadership is unnecessary. The function of leadership in a lay movement is to stimulate ideas and purposes, to help the group become sensitive to opportunities and responsibilities, and to help the group to plan its enterprises and to organize its resources for carrying its purposed action through to fulfillment.

The development of responsible lay participation involves a creative concept of administration. In contrast to thinking and purposing and programming on the part of an authoritative clerical overhead which imposes its ideas and plans upon the laity, creative administration starts with the experience of the membership from which thinking, purposing, and planning emerge under the stimulation and guidance of trained professional leaders, the co-ordination



of this thinking and purposing into a consistent and balanced program by a representative administrative board, and the commitment of these programs to the lay membership for execution, under trained leaders as counselors.

Fourth, the need for the recruiting and training of a competent leadership. This leadership is of two kinds: non-professional lay leadership and professional leadership.

For training non-professional leaders the local church can do much with its own resources through training classes and in-service guidance. But primarily the church at large must look to higher education in its undergraduate colleges. The early Disciples were prolific in establishing such colleges without due regard to distribution, financial support, academic standards, or permanency. As a result the mortality of these colleges was high. But through the Board of Higher Education and its co-operating colleges standards of excellence are being raised and adequate financial support is being sought through contributions of the churches, private gifts, and grants from industries.

For professional leadership the Brotherhood must look primarily to its growing number of graduate theological seminaries. The early Disciples were anti-theological and regarded with suspicion graduate study in seminaries. Instead, they depended upon the undergraduate college of liberal arts, with special emphasis upon Greek and Hebrew so that the "living oracles" could be read in their original tongues.

But the church in our generation can no longer depend upon undergraduate training for its professional ministry, nor upon training in the seminaries of other communions. The recent development of its seven seminaries and houses in universities, is a promising response to this imperative need. There remains much to be done in the development of these institutions, in the recruiting of young men and women for the ministry, and in securing adequate financial support.

Fifth, there is a growing feeling that there should be made explicit a body of convictions for which the Disciples stand in relation to other religious bodies and the ecumenical church, while at the same time avoiding a creed. In the World Councils Disciple representatives find themselves at a disadvantage in the eyes of other religious bodies and in their own eyes because they have no such authentic formulation.

Nevertheless, while the Disciples could never consent to the adoption of a creed, they do stand for certain fundamental convictions and principles while insisting upon complete liberty in holding to widely differing opinions. To achieve such a consensus while not only tolerating differences but regarding them as assets in an extremely difficult undertaking and requires a high degree of intellectual and religious maturity. Perhaps herein lies one of the

greatest contributions which the Disciples could make to current religious thought at a time when neo-orthodoxy has made some inroads on Disciple leaders trained in other than Disciple seminaries.

Sixth, in the light of its origins and genius, no religious group should more gratefully welcome and wholeheartedly participate in the ecumenical movement than the Disciples. This was the dream that glowed in the hearts of the founding fathers. That it has arisen outside the Disciple Brotherhood and is coming into being on other grounds than that proposed by the Campbells and Stone should not lessen Disciple response to it or enthusiasm for it. The unity for which Christ prayed and for which the Disciples have pled is in a way to be realized, whatever the obstacles that may be encountered or however long the vision may be delayed. In this the Disciples should take heart, be grateful for the promise of the fulfillment of a dream coming true, and contribute unreservedly to it.

Practically, the ecumenical union of all Christians should begin in the local church in an inclusive membership in which there is a warm welcome to all sincere followers of Christ irrespective of previous denominational affiliation, race, or culture. It should extend wholeheartedly to fellowship and co-operation with other religious bodies in the local community and nation, as well as to fellowship and co-operation in the world-wide fellowship of Christians. In such a fellowship tolerance gives way to understanding and appreciation and differences are regarded, not as liabilities, but as assets for a richer and fuller Christian experience.

In some such ways the Decade of Decision should be for the Disciples an occasion for re-examining the foundations of their faith, of their plea for Christian union and the method of achieving it, of their organizational structure, of their self perpetuation through the recruitment and training of a competent leadership, and for recommitment to the fulfillment of the intercessory prayer of our Lord for the union and witness of His followers.

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## THE EVOLUTION OF THE MODERN DISCIPLE

Orvis F. Jordan

It was in 1892 that I became a member of a Disciples church, and in 1899 I took charge of my first church as pastor. Over this span of years so many things have happened among the Disciples that it will be hard to say what things have been formative in their influence. Among my books are bound volumes of parish papers with much news of various Chicago churches covering a period of about

fifteen years, but more important are bound volumes of the Campbell Institute Bulletin for six years, beginning with October, 1910. Preceding this for two years Dr. E. S. Ames had published for the Campbell Institute the Scroll which was more than a journal to be regarded as a house organ; it was a journal for general circulation.

This journal, of which I do not have the files, was immediately attacked by The Christian Standard and The Christian Evangelist. It was about this time that Dr. C. C. Morrison became editor of The Christian Century, for a time a journal for Disciples. The great attack upon the Campbell Institute came at this time, and the membership statistics showed that it lost about ten per cent. The question was, should the Campbell Institute continue as an organization? This was answered affirmatively. To keep a little over a hundred members in touch with one another through some medium of communication was required. For six years the Campbell Institute Bulletin served this purpose. I was on an editorial committee with George Campbell, who later asked to be relieved, and for most of six years I was editor. The organization had various "chambers", and in each of a half dozen or so of these appeared short book reviews pertinent to the department. We had a department of news of the members. In 1916 Dr. Ames resumed the Scroll.

In the fall of 1910, the national convention was held at Topeka. In a signed article in the Bulletin I reported my impressions of this convention: "There are but few of our men who do not speak of this convention as the most progressive of our history. It is true that many of the things against which we have always protested were there. There was the same rag-time music, the same irreverence in the audience, the same mob psychology in the business meetings, and a lack in many of the addresses of any strong intellectual grip upon our problems." This judgment could be documented with memories that may well be allowed to perish.

I contrast this with a recent experience in a national convention at St. Louis. I had not attended a convention in several years, though through all the years keeping my name in the year book as a Disciple minister. I was surprised and delighted with the changes that I observed. Only a few of the old-timers were there. A new ministerial force was on hand, neatly groomed, courteous and intelligent.

The convention had none of the wild oratory of the old days, but a far more effective kind of public address. I shall not say that all of the speakers showed discernment of the great religious problems of our age, but I heard no rabble-rousing speeches of which we had all too many fifty years before. The effort to exclude from fellowship a theological opponent was not to be found. There were only the differences of courteous men who were on the quest of the truth. I came home from this latter convention convinced that the Disciples could not be made into a narrow-minded sect. They were on the way to make a great contribution in the history of world Christianity.

The most important force in bringing about this change was education. At the beginning of this century a number of Disciples went to the divinity school at Yale, and a few to Harvard. These set up the Disciples Divinity House with the cordial cooperation of President Harper of the University of Chicago. To this day Disciples still study religion in the eastern universities, and more lately at Vanderbilt University. The Disciples initiated Bible chairs at some state universities which led some men into the ministry. In recent years standardized schools of theology have been established in four or five locations. Short course institutions of very conservative teaching have with one or two notable exceptions died out. The result is that today the Disciples have more ministers with full professional education than ever before in their history.

Another great force in changing the Disciples from the pattern of 1910 has been the growth of ecumenical interest. It was at the Topeka convention in 1910 that the "Council on Christian Unity" was founded and Peter Ainslie was made its leader. He traveled widely, and invited ministers of different denominations to meet him in America's leading cities. He had no cut-and-dried plan for the unity of church. His was a program of conference and prayer. He has been succeeded by other great leaders. The National Council of Churches has Roy Ross as its head. John Harms has just completed fifteen years of most successful leadership in the Church Federation of Greater Chicago. Dr. W. E. Garrison has had a very great influence on the World Council of Churches. In the community church movement may be found many Disciples ministers. Dr. Bower in his day was a great force among the leaders of religious education. Dr. Emory Ross leads the ecumenical strategy in Africa.

In these days every denomination seems to be afflicted with controversy. For the Disciples I have seen a great change in this. Once the biblical literalists controlled the conventions, and occupied most of the important pulpits. Now there is a fringe of non-cooperators, almost altogether the product of short course schools. Fifty years ago the conservatives published the most widely circulated paper, and sold most of the Sunday school supplies. Now the brotherhood publishing house occupies this field.

Once men of liberal views were kept off of convention platforms, and finally found themselves so professionally besmirched that they left our fellowship and sought churches in other denominations. We lost in this way some men of very large ability. It seems to me that there is but little or this kind of loss today.

Since 1897 the Disciples have doubled their membership. The achievement in the Congo is one of the outstanding events of world missions during the past fifty years. Though the missionary society has been the target of constant attack during the past half century, it has rendered a good account of itself, and we provide leadership in African missions still.



It is impossible to give any statistics with regard to the practice of open membership. Northern Baptists have over twelve hundred such churches. Have the Disciples less than these? This practice has ceased to be a matter of debate as it was fifty years ago, when Dr. Ames recognized "members of the congregation" and Dr. Morrison received unimmersed believers into full membership in the Monroe Street Church of Chicago.

In the files of the Bulletin fifty years ago we were complaining that Disciples did so little writing. Harold Bell Wright got out a series of popular novels some of which were best sellers; Macfarlane wrote some novels of less circulation, but more real merit. The best of his writing was "Those Who Came Back." In these days Vachel Lindsay wrote "Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight", and many another poem of exceptional merit. Probably the greatest religious poet of the fifty years was Thomas Curtis Clark who read the proofs of The Christian Century for a living. In 1910 Dr. Ames published his "Psychology of Religious Experience." With a better educated ministry, where are our books now days? C. A. Garriott two years ago got out "Making the Most of the Time", a prize winning book. Emory Ross has a new book on Africa. It looks like the Disciples literary well is running dry.

There is another area in which the Disciple of today may feel a deep concern. That is in the matter of evangelistic zeal. For several decades of our history we doubled membership every ten years. We have doubled in the last sixty years, but in the later years our growth has been but slight. The day of platform evangelism and "revival meetings" is now gone, perhaps forever. All too few churches have found a substitute for these methods. But almost half of America is still to be reached with the appeal of religion. Liberal religion can learn something from the catechetical methods of the older churches, and it alone can hope to meet the doubts and problems of that part of America that is alienated from the churches. Religion does not need to be rationalistic to be reasonable. The unchurched in America are not unwilling that religion shall have the warmth of emotion, if it is disconnected from the cranky and the superstitious.

So we enter the Decade of Decision. If the leaders of this movement will study the methods of churches that have grown great in recent years, and hand these methods on to the rest of us, the Disciples shall once more be counted among the effective evangelical forces in American life.

Through the years we have had our period of interest in the social gospel. Alva W. Taylor spent a dedicated life in behalf of this cause, and we have provided other great leaders. This provided a harvest, the institutions for the care of orphan children and the aged across the country. Few denominations have excelled us in this regard. Our local churches have often been community churches in the sense that they discerned the social needs of their communities, and afforded leadership in meeting these needs. The last great

concern of Paul was to gather a fund for the relief of impoverished saints in Jerusalem. The church cannot omit this kind of concern from its program, and hope to be recognized as a New Testament church.

What may we hope for the future of our religious movement? More tolerance so that the man who deviates from established patterns of thought and action shall be influenced by conference and brotherhood. It is our greatest scandal that we who have talked so much about Christian unity have had so little unity among ourselves. To read our history and realize that a section of Mormonism came from our ranks, a sect called the Christadelphians, the anti-organ churches and more lately the "independents", should make us realize that we have a unity problem in our own ranks.

While I left the Sunday school of an emotional sect to accept the sweet reasonableness of a Disciples church, I have begun in these later years to develop some hunger for a bit more mysticism. There are realities in the spiritual universe that I may never have discovered. I could covet for the whole Disciples movement a humility that will make it ready for fresh spiritual discoveries.

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\* THE RELEVANCE OF EXISTENTIAL PHILOSOPHY TO  
THE TASK OF PREACHING

Ralph G. Wilburn  
College of the Bible, Lexington, Kentucky

Christianity is not a philosophy; it is something more than any philosophy can ever hope to be. Christianity is a religious faith, generated by, and inseparably bound up with, a particular experience of God through His own act of self-revelation in Jesus Christ.

And yet, because that which is here disclosed is ultimate truth, the Logos of all reality, this faith is relevant to the whole of existence. Theology must therefore become philosophical, in order to clarify this relevance. Theology thus finds it to be not only fruitful, but imperative to carry on conversation with philosophy, as it seeks to clarify and to understand the philosophical aspects and implications of its own message.

We are here concerned with only one particular modern philosophy, namely the philosophy of existence, which was fathered, first of all, by Soren Kierkegaard, the melancholy Dane of the nineteenth century, and which Martin Heidegger, Jean Paul Sartre and others have popularized in the European scene. But we cannot concern ourselves with the whole of this philosophy. We are here concerned with it only in regard to its practical implications for Christian theology and the task of preaching.

What now is "the philosophy of existence?" Well, in our common sense view of things, the word "existence" has only one simple meaning. A thing either is, or it isn't, as common sense sees it; and this is all the meaning there is to the term "existence." In the philosophy of Existentialism, however, the term "existence" has a much more complex meaning; the term is loaded with the qualities of personal dynamic, responsible freedom, and infinite possibility.

Thus things do not exist, for Heidegger; they are merely "on hand" or "being-ready-to-hand" (Zuhandenheit). Heidegger's ontology revolves about the human subject. His account of the nature of things moves from the point of view of the human subject outwards and then back again to the human subject. In contrast to common sense realism, one sees remnants of Idealism in Heidegger's view of reality. One cannot even talk about reality except as it appears to some mind. How could reality be a meaningful affair, except to some mind for whom it is meaningful?

Thus, for example, Heidegger does not think of a hammer as so much wood and steel, as common sense would define it; a hammer is rather a "tool," something to be defined in terms of human purpose. Says Heidegger, "The tool related to other tools is an elaborate system of regular serviceable, but modifiable relations, is the

typical thing or object in the world."<sup>1</sup> Heidegger thus not only defines reality in relational terms, but makes the relation of all things to human existence his ontological center of gravity, so to speak.

This is why Heidegger and the other Existentialists reserve the use of the term "exist" to human beings alone. Only persons are "in-being," or have "being-in-the-world." You see, this human kind of existence is really unique; it is a reality that is on the move, on the make, dynamic. It is a reality that possesses the quality of self-consciousness, self-reflection, and self-determination, in freedom. Man's being is open to himself.

To say thus that man exists means that in some way he stands outside the world of things. As Freidrich Karl Schumann of the University of Münster puts it, the world is something more for man than a mere container for beans and potatoes.<sup>2</sup> That man is in the world means more than the fact that he is circumscribed by spatial limits. In the case of man, to be in the world means to "dwell," to "sojourn," as in the Latin habitare.<sup>3</sup> Man's existence is affected by the world. The relation here is one of mutual dynamic determination. Sartre stresses the same uniqueness of human existence when he says, "Man is . . . a project which possesses a subjective life, instead of being a kind of moss, or a fungus, or a cauliflower."<sup>4</sup>

When William James confronted the intellectual girations of speculative philosophy with the question, "What difference does it make to us in living our lives?" he struck out in the direction of the philosophy of existence. Man is the kind of being which is animated by spiritual zeal and concern. Man's involvement in, and interrelatedness with, his environment of things and persons, in thought, word, play, business, and politics (being-in-the-world) is summed up by Heidegger in his doctrine that the inner essence of man's being is Care (Sorge). It is the basic nature of man's being that it "always engages and spends itself in the world of its Care (Sorge)."<sup>5</sup> This German word "Sorge" is difficult to translate. It embraces the basic ontological moods of uneasiness, trouble, grief, sorrow, anxiety, conscience, guilt, and death.

Enough said to indicate that the philosophy of existence places the dominant emphasis on the concrete individual, animated by passionate concern (Sorge). He exists for himself as possibility. The future enables him to be concerned about his potentiality of Being and to "project" himself into the "for the sake of himself." "The primary meaning, i.e. the inner possibility of Existentiality as such is the future."<sup>6</sup>

A human being, says Sartre, is a being that makes himself. He is not ready-made at the start. "Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself."<sup>7</sup> "The self," says Louis Lavelle, "is not a reality that is given, but a reality that seeks itself."<sup>8</sup> It is



one of the fundamental assertions of the philosophy of existence, says Jean Wahl, that "We are, without finding any reason for our being; hence, we are existence without essence."<sup>9</sup> Accordingly, man's task is to create essence and meaning, to create it out of nothing, nothing but his own creative, but tragically lonely freedom--a nauseating predicament, according to Sartre. By saying that existence precedes essence, says Sartre, "we mean that man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world and defines himself afterwards. If man as the existentialist sees him is not defineable, it is because to begin with he is nothing. He will not be anything until later, and then he will be what he makes of himself."<sup>10</sup>

This existentialist notion of man as subject is of course derived primarily from Kierkegaard, for whom the central concern always was: "total human existence in its movement in time, as the prime dimension of all concrete reality."<sup>11</sup> Kierkegaard's major anthropological thesis is that man's nature is an objectivity that is alien to him; man's task is to appropriate his own nature and thus to become a subject; his task is the appropriation of an objectivity, becoming subjective. This means that transcendence is of the very essence of the self or subject. As James Brown puts it, the subject "not so much is as has been and is not, and will be what it now is not. It is somehow a possibility poised between two nothingnesses."<sup>12</sup>

Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary (1952) defines Existentialism as a "term covering a number of related doctrines denying objective universal values and holding that a man must create values for himself through action and by living each moment to the full."

What now are the practical implications of this philosophy of existence relative to Christian theology and the task of the ministry? There are several of course; but I should like to deal briefly with five such implications.

## I

Existential philosophy has led to an understanding of revelation as eschatological event or "salvation occurrence" (to use Bultmann's terminology); and it has made possible a recovery of the biblical concept of the Living God.

Under the impact of the existential revolt against the old metaphysics, theology has abandoned the orthodox idea of revelation (which really presupposed the old metaphysics), as a set of infallible, eternal truths of a Platonic sort, once for all delivered to the saints. Following along existential lines, theology has adopted what seems to be a more biblical view of revelation, a view of revelation as dynamic event, involving the creative participation of the subject.

Subjectivity is of course construed in different ways by Heidegger and by Kierkegaard. As Brown says, for Kierkegaard "subjectivity is a characteristically defined exercise of human thought and will in face of a particular, indeed unique Object; a blend of activity and passivity evoked in believing hearts and lives by the entrance of the Eternal into history as an individual Man."<sup>13</sup>

In Kierkegaard one finds the emphasis that "truth is subjectivity," but this is the kind of subjectivity that stands in dynamic relation to the Eternal One. Following this line of thought, Brunner, Barth, Bultmann, Tillich and others have developed the idea of revelation as a dynamic, personal encounter between man and God, an encounter challenging man to response, to the decision of faith. God's self-revelation, so conceived, is the answer to man's existential predicament and estrangement.

In the Galatian Epistle Paul wrote, "Now before faith came, we were confined under the law, kept under restraint until faith should be revealed."<sup>14</sup> Bultmann comments on this passage by saying, "This expected 'revealing' has now become a thing of the present (Now that faith has come); this does not mean that now a hitherto unknown teaching about faith is being expounded, but that it now has become a possibility, and in those who have faith, a reality-faith has made its appearance, for this is just what 'be revealed' ( $\alpha\pi\kappa\alpha\lambda\upsilon\pi\tau\epsilon\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$ ) or its noun 'revelation' ( $\alpha\pi\kappa\alpha\lambda\upsilon\psi\iota\varsigma$ ), and also 'be manifested' ( $\phi\alpha\upsilon\epsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$  -Roma. 3:21), mean when used as eschatological terms-appear on the scene, become possibility, or become operative."<sup>15</sup>

These dynamic terms of Bultmann-"appearing on the scene," "becoming operative," "becoming effective"-indicate the basic way in which revelation is now being construed, not as some objective thing, such as book, creed, church, or sacrament, nor yet as a mystical instreaming psychological influence, but as eschatological event. Revelation, as the saying goes, is "the mighty act of God" in history, whereby through definite historical media God actually confronts an individual and addresses him with a word of judgment and of hope. The "Word of God" in this encounter contains an ultimate claim upon one and a victorious word of promise, as Paul put it, "it is the power of God for salvation."<sup>16</sup>

To say that a revelatory event is an existential event means that it is an event in which something of profound significance happens to the consciousness of the receiving subject, in his 'being-in-the-world.' There can be no such thing as a wholly factual or objective revelation. This would be a contradiction in terms. There is no revelation until there is revelation to someone, in a concrete, socio-historical situation of concern. Revelation remains uncompleted if no one receives it. It is completed only if it finds fulfillment on the subjective side of the relation.<sup>17</sup>

When God discloses Himself to an individual in a revelatory event, the whole of the subject's personality is affected. As Paul expressed it, the subject is "apprehended" (*καταλαμβάνω*).<sup>18</sup> That is, the subject is grasped or laid hold of by the manifestation of the mystery, with the result that his mind is illumined concerning some ultimate meaning of life and his heart responds in obedient love. To love God, Paul wrote, is to be known by God. And to know God, through the revelatory experience, is "to be known by God."<sup>19</sup>

It is the personal integrity and validity of the subjective aspect of true revelation which forever distinguishes it from false revelations. It forever excludes what Tillich calls "a non-existential concept of revelation."<sup>20</sup> The false revelation of church dogmas, for example, which are imposed on the individual conscience in an authoritarian way, does not meet the test of this demand of true revelation for subjective perception and integrity. Such authoritarian claims must therefore be rejected, insofar as they lay claim to revelatory value.<sup>21</sup>

Correlated with this concept of revelation as existential event stands the new emphasis on the biblical idea of the Living God, known in the I-Thou relation. In contrast to the old philosophical approach to the problem of life's Ultimate, where we dealt with a composition of propositions about God, as an object of theoretical knowledge, the entire problem of our knowledge of God is now thrown into a new dimension. The subject-object dimension of reality is not the dimension from which proper categories can be drawn to explicate the religious knowledge of faith. For at its heart, the religious relation is something infinitely deeper than a relation in the I-it dimension of reality. In the I-it dimension, as Martin Buber says, "I perceive something, I am sensible of something, I imagine something."<sup>22</sup> But one steps into another dimension of being when he no longer knows something, but instead utters the word "Thou." When subject addresses subject, man "takes his stand in relation." Here indeed we approach existence at its deepest level, in the meeting of an "I" with "Thou."

Here then we come upon a profound aspect of God's transcendence of the subject-object structure of the phenomenal world. Is not Buber correct when he writes that "God is the Being that...may properly only be addressed, not expressed?"<sup>23</sup> To a degree this is true of our fellowmen. They confront us, not as objects, but as subjects; here subject faces subject. And when they are present, the second person mode of speaking is alone appropriate. Of course, in their absence we do speak to another about them, in the third person. But the Eternal One is always present; He is omni-present. As John Baillie reminds us, "God is the Eternal Thou by whom we are at every moment being addressed."<sup>24</sup> This is real transcendence, for

by his very nature, the "Thou" cannot become an "it." Knowledge of the Thou as Thou cannot therefore be a subject's knowledge of an object, in the phenomenal sense of the subject-object correlation. The God who is known in the experience of revelation is not just another object of knowledge. He is rather "the exclusive Thou of prayer and devotion."<sup>25</sup> He is the Living Lord of biblical faith.

It seems to me that there are profound and far-reaching implications here for the task of preaching. What the preacher should be trying to do is to bring about the fulfillment of revelation, as personal encounter, in the lives of those to whom he ministers. His preaching should somehow contain kerygmatic power, power to serve as a stimulus, so that through him and what he says, God can actually find his hearers and lift them into that communion with Himself which constitutes the relation of faith. Something like this must have been what Paul had in mind when he wrote that God is pleased "through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe."<sup>26</sup> Sometimes the Spirit moves people mightily through preaching; at other times the sermon seems to be as "dry as dust." Sometimes the sermon is over-intellectualistic, in the sense that the preacher fails to remember that the thought-content of his sermon is not, as such, the Word of God. The preacher may engage in profound philosophical inquiry and argumentation (a luxury which is quite proper in its place), but this is not necessarily a medium of revelation. He may affirm with great theological gusto the orthodox dogmas of "the faith of our fathers" (history too is a legitimate study in its proper place), but the dogmas of orthodoxy are, in themselves, not revelation. He may present the teaching of Scripture, but Scripture, qua Scripture, is not revelation.

Revelatory preaching is that preaching in which and through which God succeeds in finding the listener and becomes his God, in the relation of faith. It is that kind of preaching in which the preacher remains aware of the existential character of Christian truth and allows Christ to speak and act, through the unworthy instrument of his preaching. It is that kind of preaching in which the preacher shares the conviction of Paul: "We are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us." <sup>27</sup>

## II

Existential philosophy has helped us to see more clearly what is meant by the kind of understanding which is involved in the experience of faith.

Existentialists distinguish sharply between subjective truth and objective truth. They do not deny that scientific method can, and does, lead to a valid knowledge of objective truth about our world. This is all to the good, of course. But as David Roberts puts it, the Existentialists "insist that in connection with ultimate matters it is impossible to lay aside the impassioned concern of



the human individual. They are calling our attention to the fact that in the search for ultimate truth the whole man, and not only his intellect or reason, is caught up and involved. His emotions and his will must be aroused and engaged so that he can live the truth he sees."<sup>28</sup>

Say then that the existential emphasis is a cure for the disease of "spectatoritis." The existential point of view is the arena point of view, as opposed to the balcony outlook. How, for instance, could the detached on-looker in the balcony of ancient Rome's Colosseum really know what it meant for the Christian martyr to wrestle with the wild beasts? How can I, from my detached position, as a mere observer, really know what it meant for the German Christian clergy and the Jews to be subject to the tortures of Hitler's concentration camp at Dachau, even though I visited there, after the war was over, and gazed in horrified amazement, at its efficient gas chamber, its ovens, and the graves of the ashes of its thousands upon thousands of victims? Only the person who is himself involved in such ultimate life-situations can really know what they mean.

Now this existential teaching, that the deeper truth about life is known only through the personal involvement of one's entire being in it, has helped us to recover the biblical meaning of faith, after a period in which the aura of sanctity which surrounded scientific knowledge tended to cause us to lose sight of the depth-dimension in the knowledge of faith. We no longer view faith in doctrinaire terms, as intellectual belief in the truth of church dogmas of Bible doctrines. Faith is a matter of personal decision. It is a decision made as a result of the fact that one's very being is grasped by the dynamic encounter with the living God, who confronts us in Christ. One's entire being and destiny are involved in the experience of being confronted by the gospel of God. It is no longer a case of merely knowing about something, and saluting it from afar; it is a case of being grasped by a living truth, in a decisively personal way.

No one has expressed this existential character of the truth of God's revelation in Christ more clearly than the Apostle Paul, when he wrote, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life that I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."<sup>28</sup>

This is saving faith. It is the personal involvement of one's whole being in the truth of the gospel. It is surrender and commitment to the call and challenge of God, in Jesus as Christ. It is the responsible response of obedient love to the mighty act and disclosure of God's love, by which God Himself finds us, where we are, and claims our lives for the purpose of His holy Love.

### III

Thirdly, the existentialists have opened our eyes to the tragic and contradictory stuff of which human selfhood is made.

Nietzsche's classical phrase "God is dead" has proven to be prophetically true, for millions of modern men. The meaninglessness, the sheer nothingness of life, without God, is reflected in much of modern literature and art. It finds particularly poignant expression in the plays of Sartre, the novels of Kafka and Hemingway, and the poetry of T. S. Eliot. It is dominant motif in Tennessee Williams' A Streetcar Named Desire.

From Kierkegaard forward, existentialist thinkers, like depth psychology, have been exposing the terrifying depths of the human soul--its guilt, anxiety and despair, its fear and trembling, its suffering and torment, and in the last analysis its ultimate nothingness which is creeping over the modern mind like the icy winds of winter. All of which confirms Nietzsche's prophecy that modern man has been "groping his way in an infinite nothingness."

The thought of Sartre is especially revealing. Sartre declares that he is an atheist, and yet, as Wilfred Desan says, "more than any other philosopher he has emphasized the extreme need of the Absolute without, however, conceding the existence of an absolute Being as a remedy to this obsession."<sup>29</sup> Sartre's play, "Lucifer and the Lord" is strangely preoccupied with the idea of God. Existentialists like Sartre seem to be suffering from an inward torture of soul, tortured by the thought that God really does not exist, yet nevertheless must be.

The Russian, Fyodor Dostoevsky, out of his insight into the problematical character of human existence, challenged the nineteenth century liberal faith in the perfectibility of man. Dostoevsky was shipped off to Siberia in 1849, where he spent four years in a convict camp. Here he gained profound insight into the soul of the Russian people. Here he had to face up to the strange mixture of good and evil in the human heart. But here, too, Dostoevsky recovered his faith in Christ. The popularity of his novels show that he has uttered a word about the nature of man that needed to be spoken. He has eloquently exposed the suffering and torment, as well as the glory and hope of man, through the resurrection.

Now church people, especially American church people, often find themselves repelled by this existential unveiling of the tragic depths of the human soul. But church people have too often lived in a theological, make-believe world of easy-going optimism. So much has this been true that some optimistic liberals of a generation ago even eliminated the word "sin" from their theological vocabulary. But as David Roberts aptly words the question,

What good can possibly come from turning away from these irrational and demonic forces which are menacing

folk in our time so savagely? Why should we be unwilling, or unable, to face squarely the life of man in all its vulnerability, edginess and estrangement? And how may the healing powers of the Christian gospel ever come to grips with the dark forces of sin, despair, and death unless and until these forces are brought radically out into the open by our searching thought? Only if we acknowledge them for what they are can we make any effective answer to them. Here it seems that even the atheistic existentialists have a picture of man-in-the-world to share with us, which we refuse to face only at grave peril to ourselves and our own message.<sup>30</sup>

We may say then, that the existential analysis of man's predicament has made it possible for Christianity to recover the realistic biblical view of man, not only as a finite child of nature, subject to mortality and the threat of non-being, but also as a sinner. Much clearer than a generation ago, Christianity today is aware of man's tragic misuse of the anxiety which stems from his freedom of spirit, by which man places himself in contradiction against his fellows, divided within his own self, and estranged from the eternal God.

#### IV

A fourth reason why Christianity finds itself profoundly interested in existentialism lies in the fact that more than anything else, existentialism represents a protest against the collectivistic forces of our modern world, which are destroying the inner integrity of the individual, and causing him to lose his very soul, by submerging him in the crowd.

Modern anonymous man tries to escape from the terrifying freedom of being a responsible individual, by finding a false security in the crowd. He sacrifices his responsibility for self-direction and allows his being to be shaped by an other-directed pattern of behaviour.

With biting irony Kierkegaard wrote against this collectivistic trend of modern times. Listen to this passage from his book, The Sickness unto Death:

Only let us hold together and secure ourselves by seeing to it that the Parson preachifies in this way. And if there should be any individual who ventured to talk differently, an individual who was foolish enough to make his own life anxious and responsible in fear and trembling, and should then want also to worry others--then let us secure ourselves by regarding him as mad, or if need be, by putting him to death. If only there are many

of us engaged in it, it is not wrong, what the many do is the will of God. This wisdom, we know by experience--for we are not inexperienced youths, we do not throw out ill-considered words, we talk as men of experience, and know that hitherto all men have submitted to this wisdom, kings and emperors and their excellencies. By the aid of this wisdom all of our cattle have been bred up--and, by jove, God shall also have to submit to it. The thing to do is to become many, a whole lot of us, if we do that, then we are secured against the judgment of eternity.<sup>31</sup>

Perhaps more than anything else, the existentialists want to rescue the individual from this "inauthentic" or fraudulent kind of existence, which Heidegger calls "The ubiquitous dictator of human affairs." Says Kierkegaard, "One might say that I am the moment of individuality, but I refuse to be a paragraph in a system." The existentialists thus drive man back to his most basic inner problems. They demand that one learn what it means to be a responsible individual, how to use his ultimate freedom, how to face up to the threat of non-being and death. They demand that one wrestle with these deep problems of human existence until he finds the answers for his own existence, and not take them over, second-hand, from somebody else's experience. Whether the existentialist is religious in out-look or not, he is always one who fights for the rights of the individual, against the crowd, for the individual's uniqueness, freedom and self-transcendence.

You see, this is why Rudolf Bultmann finds so much in common between the Christian gospel and the existential view of human existence. Bultmann contends that the Apostle Paul was an existentialist when in Galatians, chapter 4, Paul argued that in pre-Christian experience, we were "children and slaves to the elemental spirits of the Universe," that is, says Bultmann, not yet responsible subjects. But Christ came, says Paul, so that we might receive "the adoption of sons," that is, that we might become responsible subjects and face up to our own personal responsibility for the form of the world and our own destiny, under God.

Here, then, is a basic aspect of the philosophy of existence which is present already in the classical Protestant emphasis on personal faith, the right of private judgment, the rejection of external church authority, and that liberty which means, to quote Luther, that "the Christian man is lord over all and subject to none." At this point Protestant Christianity should recognize that it has an ally in the modern philosophy of existence.

## V

The fifth and final point of contact between Christianity and existentialism has to do with the idea of freedom.



Atheistic existentialists, of course, think that man realizes his destiny only by mastering self, without inventing any imaginary relation to God. Man's freedom is thus a dreadful predicament, for it is viewed against the ontological backdrop of absolute nothingness. As Alexandre Koyre expresses it, "Through anguish we discover the foundation of Nothingness on which we are perched, or from which we are come--an ocean of Nothingness, from which we painfully emerge for a time, but which is always there to swallow us, and in which we are always about to sink."<sup>32</sup> Little wonder that Heidegger and Sartre feel that man is condemned to be free, for such freedom is a terrifying condemnation. Religious existentialists, however, like Luther, Kierkegaard, Pascal, Gabriel Marcel, Rudolf Bultmann, and Paul Tillich, contend that genuine freedom is fulfilled only by overcoming the estrangement of self-centeredness, and finding the New Being in Christ, a Being with God's Holy Will of Love at the center. So that, instead of being bottled up in our freedom, or perched on "an ocean of Nothingness," Christianity declares freedom to mean openness toward, and capacity for, harmonious integration with the will of the Eternal. True freedom is freedom for God. The issue is not whether one is free or unfree. The issue is whether man's ultimate freedom is a tragic situation, or in fact, a hopeful relation. As Roberts says, "The issue....is not freedom against something else, but freedom without God verses freedom with God."<sup>33</sup>

Indeed, the Christian belief in God emphasizes human freedom, in the most radical way. It says that God gave man this freedom, and that He still cares so much that He Himself comes to us and offers Himself in the only way that He can, so as to win us, in freedom, namely, through the patient suffering on the Cross. In the Cross God takes upon Himself the burden of our guilt, breaks through the wall of our selfishness and pride, and releases us from the prison house of self-centeredness, for a life of Christ-like love of one's neighbor.

So if Christianity has learned much from the philosophers of existence, it also has a redemptive word to proclaim to these men. Christianity challenges Heidegger and Sartre's contention that the freedom of true self-affirmation means a denial of God. Why, pray tell, should true self-affirmation mean a denial of God, the God whose creativity is the ground and source of self-hood? Heidegger and Sartre seem to be victims of the very disease which they seek to diagnose. In opposing heteronomy, they have fallen headlong into the trap of autonomy, and passed by the healing power of theonomy, which saves us from the perils of both heteronomy and autonomy.

The Christian gospel declares that the redemptive remedy for the spiritual sickness which grows out of man's self-love is to be delivered from it by the power of the New Being in Christ. The death and resurrection of Christ is symbolic of what happens to us in this transfiguration: the old self-centered self is shattered and crucified, and the new being-in-Christ is resurrected, bringing to man the true liberty of sonship in the Kingdom of God. Perhaps

no message of the ancient gospel, which declares that "if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed."<sup>34</sup>

#### FOOTNOTES

\* This paper was read to the annual Pastors' Conference of the Disciples of Christ of Kentucky, convened at the College of the Bible, Lexington, Jan. 11, 1960.

- 1 H. J. Blackham, Six Existentialist Thinkers, p. 89.
- 2 Günther Bornkamm, Rudolf Bultmann, and Friedrich Karl Schumann, Die christliche Hoffnung und das Problem der Entmythologisierung, p. 60.
- 3 Martin Heidegger, Existence and Being, p. 42.
- 4 Walter Kaufmann, Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre, p. 291.
- 5 Heidegger, op. cit., p. 64.
- 6 Ibid., p. 94.
- 7 Kaufmann, op. cit., p. 291.
- 8 As quoted by James Brown, Subject and Object in Modern Theology, p. 13.
- 9 Kaufmann, op. cit., p. 290.
- 10 Brown, op. cit., p. 84.
- 11 Ibid., p. 91.
- 12 Ibid., p. 169.
- 13 Galatians 3:23.
- 14 Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, I, 275.
- 15 Romans 1:16.
- 16 Ralph G. Wilburn, The Prophetic Voice in Protestant Christianity, p. 134.
- 17 Philippians 3:12.
- 18 Galatians 4:9.
- 19 Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, I, 127.
- 20 Wilburn, op. cit., pp. 134-5.

- 21 Martin Buber, I and Thou, p. 4.
- 22 Ibid., p. 81.
- 23 John Baillie, Our Knowledge of God, p. 21.
- 24 Martin Buber, Two Types of Faith, p. 130.
- 25 I Corinthians 1:21.
- 26 II Corinthians 5:20.
- 27 David E. Roberts, Existentialism and Religious Belief, p. 7
- 28 Galatians 2:20.
- 29 Wilfred Desan, The Tragic Finale, p. 179.
- 30 Roberts, op. cit., p. 335.
- 31 Soren Kierkegaard, The Sickness unto Death, pp. 202-203.
- 32 Wahl, op. cit., p. 45.
- 33 Roberts, op. cit., pp. 339-340.
- 34 John 8:36.

THE TRANSFIGURED CHRIST  
A STUDY OF MARK 9:2-3

Richard Johnson  
Disciples Divinity House, University of Chicago

I

A SURVEY OF INTERPRETATIONS OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

The account of the Transfiguration is so rich in imagery that it is perhaps inevitable that interpreters should arrive at rather diverse conclusions as to its meaning. Our plan will be to survey some of these interpretations, to continue to an exegetical study of the Transfiguration in Mark, and finally, on the basis of this study, to attempt a conclusion as to its meaning for the second Evangelist.

(1) A number of scholars view the Transfiguration as a misplaced resurrection story. Bultmann writes, "Dass diese Legende eine ursprünglich Auferstehungsgeschichte ist, ist längst erkannt worden...."<sup>1</sup> This line is also taken by the French scholar, Maurice Gougel,<sup>2</sup> and apparently had its origin in the work of Wellhausen.<sup>3</sup> Meyer goes so far as to find the origin of the resurrection faith in the Transfiguration story. He states, "The Resurrection and the appearances of the Risen Lord have grown out of the Transfiguration; it is the final root of Christianity."<sup>4</sup>

There are two main arguments for viewing the Transfiguration as a misplaced resurrection story. First, supporters of this view point out that the Transfiguration account seems to break into a natural connection between Mark 8:34-9:1 and 9:11ff. It is true that these passages still seem to form a connected whole when the Transfiguration is removed, but this is only proof of the possibility that the Transfiguration is out of place. If our interpretation of the Transfiguration is correct, we shall see in the next section of this paper that the Transfiguration fits very well into its present context, and by no means appears to break the narrative.<sup>5</sup>

The other argument centers around the use of the Transfiguration in the Ethiopic text of the second century Apocalypse of Peter.<sup>6</sup> Here, it is argued, the Transfiguration is placed in a post resurrection setting. It is difficult, however, to see why we should assume that this late apocalypse is more reliable than the three Synoptics which are unanimous in placing the Transfiguration during the life of Jesus. But even if such an assumption is made, Boobyer has argued convincingly that in the Ethiopic text of the Apocalypse of Peter the Transfiguration is presented as an ascension story rather than as a resurrection appearance, and that the two cannot simply be equated.<sup>7</sup>



Of course, the standing objection to any attempt aimed at interpreting the Transfiguration in terms of Resurrection is that such a reading cannot explain many details in the account such as the presence of Moses and Elijah, the cloud, the tabernacles, etc.

(2) Others have seen the Transfiguration as a prefiguration of the Ascension. We have just mentioned that the Transfiguration appears to be treated as an ascension story in the Apocalypse of Peter. Davies forcefully argues that Luke sees the Transfiguration as a prefiguration of Ascension.<sup>8</sup> He is able to make a formidable case, but we still must ask if this is the only significance which is given to the narrative. Davies himself argues on the basis of Acts 1:11 that Luke views the Ascension as a prefiguration of the Parousia.<sup>9</sup> If the Transfiguration is a prefiguration of the Ascension, and the latter prefigures the Parousia, then the Transfiguration itself must have eschatological implications as Davies goes on to indicate. Thus, even if we accept Davies judgment that Luke views the Transfiguration as foreshadowing of Ascension, and decide that Luke's interpretation of the Transfiguration also holds true in Mark, we do not completely explain the Transfiguration on that basis, but rather gain support for the fourth position we will outline, namely that the Transfiguration is a prefiguration of the Parousia.

(3) A large group of scholars read the Transfiguration as a confirmation of the messiahship of Jesus. Bernardin describes the account of the Transfiguration as, "...a fiction of the later Jewish Christian community, composed as a result of the dispute with the Jews over Jesus' Messiahship...."<sup>10</sup> The point to note for our purposes is not Bernardin's denial of the historicity of the account, but his attempt to find the purpose of the Transfiguration in its affirmation of Jesus' messianic role.

Another such scholar is Ernst Lohmeyer. Originally he attempted to trace the origin of the account to two separate sources. On the one hand, he maintained, it rested on a Jewish tradition which linked Moses and Elijah with the coming of the Messiah.<sup>11</sup> But the Transfiguration itself was Greek in origin and rested on similar accounts in the Mystery Religions.<sup>12</sup> But by the time of the writing of his commentary on Mark, Lohmeyer apparently had abandoned this theory, and interpreted both sections on the basis of Jewish tradition.<sup>13</sup> In both cases Lohmeyer found the central intent of the story in its affirmation, "...dass Jesus des Messias, der Bringer und Vollender der Endzeit ist; in seinem irdischen Leben haben einmal alle Prophezeiungen und Erwartungen sich verwirklicht...."<sup>14</sup>

These interpreters base their conclusions on two lines of evidence. The context of the passage seems to fix the event as a Divine confirmation of Peter's confession which is made in the previous chapter. And various details of the story, which we will examine in our exegesis of the passage, such as the mention of six days, the presence of Moses and Elijah, the setting on the mountain,

the reference to the tabernacles, the cloud, etc., can be traced to Jewish eschatological and cultic traditions.

Perhaps the most exciting work in this area has been done by Harald Riesenfeld. Basing his investigation on Mowinckle's theory of an original New Years day Enthronement Festival underlying much of the Jewish cultus, Riesenfeld finds eschatological motifs in the festival, and finally finds traces of this cultic tradition in the Transfiguration account. The Transfiguration, he writes, "...referme une application de certains symboles de l'intronisation messianique a la personne de Jesus."<sup>15</sup> It is an Enthronement of Christ in which His divine kingship is proclaimed and his messianic role affirmed. Although certain scholars have criticized Riesenfeld for his, "...application to the New Testament of unproved assumptions about the Jewish cultux...",<sup>16</sup> the evidence for Mowinckle's theory continues to grow, and Riesenfeld has made an important contribution in investigating its implications for the interpretation of the Transfiguration.

(4) A final group of scholars look forward from the Transfiguration rather than backward to find a clue to its meaning. Instead of seeing the event as primarily a fulfillment of Jewish messianic expectation, they view it as a prefiguration of the future glory of Christ. F. C. Grant says of the Transfiguration that, "...it was preliminary to and pointed forward to the coming of Christ 'in glory', at the Parousia".<sup>17</sup> Perhaps the most complete defense of this view is presented by G. H. Boobyer in his book, St. Mark and the Transfiguration Story.<sup>18</sup>

Defenders of this position are able to summon evidence in two areas. First, they attempt to find traces in early Christian eschatology of the same elements in the Transfiguration account which exponents of the last point of view traced to Jewish eschatology. We will note some of these in our exegesis of the Transfiguration in Mark.

A second argument for interpreting the Transfiguration as a prefiguration of the Parousia is a rather large amount of evidence that it was so regarded by many in the early church. Since our exegesis will concentrate on the Transfiguration account in Mark, perhaps we should here examine some of these other sources which seem to interpret the Transfiguration as looking forward to the Parousia.

We have already noted Davies claim that Luke sees the Transfiguration as prefiguring the Ascension, and that in Acts 1:11 Luke sees the latter event as prefiguration of the Parousia. There is good reason to believe that the Transfiguration is also presented as a prefiguration of the Parousia in II Peter. The chief emphasis of the book appears to be eschatological.<sup>19</sup> The statement which immediately follows the Transfiguration account seems to point to its eschatological significance. "You will do well to pay attention to

this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts." (II Peter 1:19)<sup>20</sup>

We have seen that in the Ethiopic text of the second century Apocalypse of Peter the Transfiguration is treated as an Ascension account. There is also evidence that the account is made to point to the Parousia. The title of the whole work seems to be, "The Second Coming of Christ and Resurrection of the Dead (which Christ revealed unto Peter) who died because of their sins, for that they kept not the commandment of God their creator."<sup>21</sup> The revelation which is given comes as a response to the request, "...Declare unto us what are the signs of thy coming and of the end of the world...."<sup>22</sup> And Boobyer has made a careful study of the elements in the account which appear to point toward the Parousia.<sup>23</sup>

Finally, there is a statement by Origen which indicates that he knew of some who interpreted the Transfiguration in terms of the Parousia. Speaking of Matthew 16:28 he writes, "Some refer these things to the going up...of the three disciples into the high mountain with Jesus apart; and those who adopt this interpretation say that Peter and the remaining two did not taste death before they saw the Son of Man coming in his own kingdom and in his own glory. For when they saw Jesus transfigured before them so that His face shone, etc., they saw the Kingdom of God coming with power".<sup>24</sup>

We should conclude this brief survey by pointing out that the four positions outlined are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Thus, Ronald Preston comes close to combining the first and the fourth positions. Although he does not find the Transfiguration to be a misplaced resurrection story, he does interpret it in terms of both Resurrection and Parousia. "There has been discussion as to which of these last two emphases (Resurrection or Parousia) is primary, but it is a minor question compared with the fact that both are there."<sup>25</sup> And Ramsey combines the last two of the positions we have outlined. Transfiguration is both fulfillment of Jewish messianic expectations and prefiguration of future glory. Stating his general agreement with Boobyer he continues,

But the significance of the event is not wholly futurist, and Boobyer seems to fall into a false simplification when he so treats it. The Transfiguration does indicate that the messianic age is already being realized: Jesus is the Messiah, the Kingdom of God is here, the age to come is breaking into the world.<sup>26</sup>

## II

### AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF THE TRANSFIGURATION IN MARK

#### The Glory of God in Christ

And after six days Jesus takes Peter and James and John and leads them up a high mountain, privately alone. And he was transfigured before them, and his garments became glistening, exceedingly white, as a fuller on earth is not able to brighten them. And Elijah and Moses appeared to them and they were talking to Jesus. (Mark 9:2-4)

The passage is rich in symbolic overtones. Even the phrase "after six days" may have cultic significance. B. W. Bacon has written an article tracing the numerous uses of the term in the Old Testament.<sup>27</sup> Creation was, of course, done in six days with rest on the seventh. Man was commanded to work six days with rest on the seventh (Ex. 20:9, 23:12; 31:15; 34:21; 35:2; Lev. 23:3; Deut. 5:13, etc.). The Hebrews were to gather manna six days and were told that on the seventh it would not appear (Ex. 16:26). The Feast of the Tabernacles was celebrated for seven days (Lev. 23:34; 23:42; Deut. 16:13). Note that this may lend some small support for Riesenfeld's view that the Transfiguration should be interpreted in terms of a Jewish Enthronement Festival, for he regards the Feast of the Tabernacles as a later derivation from an original Enthronement Festival.

There is nothing, however, to specifically connect these uses of "after six days" or "on the seventh day" to our passage. If the phrase "after six days" is to be seen as derived from Old Testament tradition, perhaps the most likely possibility for its derivation is its use in Ex. 24:16. "The glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days; and on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud". There is much to link the Transfiguration with the Sinai event. The very presence of Moses in our passage may be a hint in this direction. The setting for both events is a mountain. The cloud and the voice coming from the cloud appears in the third portion of Mark's Transfiguration story. Even the Transfiguration of Christ itself may have some connection with the fact that the skin of Moses' face shone when he descended from Sinai (Ex. 34:29).

The three apostles, Peter, James, and John seem to form a special group in Mark's Gospel. At key points they appear alone with Jesus. They are with Jesus at the healing of Peter's Mother-in-law (1:29). They are again permitted to be with Jesus at the raising of the nobleman's daughter (5:37). In the "little apocalypse" it is they whom Jesus tells of the coming fall of the temple (13:3). Finally, it is these three who are permitted to go with Jesus to Gethsemane (14:3). In the third portion of our exegesis we will note the key disclosure which is made to them in the passage before us.

Goguel suggests that, "it seems as though the idea of the three intimate friends of Jesus may have served as an explanation of the fact that for so long tradition ignored the story of the Transfiguration and the Synoptic Apocalypse".<sup>28</sup> But another suggestion seems more likely. "The idea of this group might be the reflection



of the part played by Peter, James and John in the Primitive Church".<sup>29</sup> This is especially possible if James has been mistaken for James the brother of Jesus. Then these three would be the three Paul says were "reputed to be pillars" in Gal. 1:9.

Do these three then form some kind of an esoteric group within the circle of apostles? If this is the case it is clear that they are not given special privilege for themselves, but special duty to perform on behalf of others. This is made clear by the story of the request by James and John to sit on the right and left of Christ in His glory. With this request they have misunderstood their mission. They are called to "drink the cup" Christ drinks and to be baptized with His baptism--which may refer to His death, and they are told, "whoever would be first among you must be slave of all". (10:44) The events at which they are alone with Christ include times of agony (14:3), predictions of coming catastrophe (13:3), healing (1:29), and new life (5:37). It has been suggested that the three apostles are given their special role because in early tradition all die as martyrs.<sup>30</sup> Perhaps Mark intends to show that they have been given glimpses of the suffering to which they are called and the glory which comes through it.

There is a possibility that the form of ἀναφέρω which we have translated "leads" has cultic significance. In the majority of cases in the LXX ἀναφέρω translates the Hebrew words אָנֹכִי in the hiphil or אָנֹכִי in the hiphil. אָנֹכִי in the hiphil can be used in the general sense of "to cause to go up", but the idea of causing sacrifices to go up to God seems to have led to a technical use of the term for offering up sacrifices.<sup>32</sup> אָנֹכִי is normally employed in the latter technical sense.<sup>33</sup> The same is true of ἀναφέρω in the New Testament.<sup>34</sup> In a few passages the term is employed in the general sense of "leading up". But often the technical sense of "offering up" a sacrifice is intended as in such passages as Heb. 7:27; 9:28; 13:15; James 2:21; I Pet. 2:5, 24.<sup>35</sup> There is at least a possibility that in a passage so loaded with symbols as the one before us that ἀναφέρω is intentionally used to imply something of its technical sense of offering up a sacrifice. If what we have said in the preceding paragraph about the nature of the mission which is given to the three disciples is correct, then such a use of ἀναφέρω would make sense. This possibility should be kept in mind when we approach the exegesis of the second portion of our passage.

Much has been written in an attempt to identify the particular mountain where Mark places the scene of the Transfiguration. A more important question would be whether we can find theological significance in the setting. But mountains are the scene of so many events in the Bible that we could find support for almost any of the interpretations of the Transfiguration we have outlined, on the basis of this setting. Those who see the Transfiguration story as a misplaced resurrection story feel they can identify the mountain as the one in Matt. 28:16. Those who see the Transfiguration as a prefiguration of the Ascension can point to the mountain in

Acts 1:12. Those who seek traces of Jewish eschatology in the Transfiguration can point to the fact that both Moses and Elijah, who appear in our passage, and who we will see are figures in Jewish eschatology, receive revelation on mountains (Ex. 19:20-24 and I Kings 19:11-18). Those who seek traces of early Christian eschatology in the Transfiguration can point to mountains in Matt. 24:3ff; Mark 13:3; and Rev. 21:10, as the scene for eschatological revelation. In regard to what we have already seen of the role of suffering in our passage we might point to the mountains of Gethsemane and Golgotha (Mark 14:32; 15:22) as the scene of suffering.

Perhaps the most likely identification of the significance of the mountain is that which connects it with Moses' experience on Sinai. We have already noted other elements which link the Transfiguration account with the account of Moses on Sinai, and if we make any identification of the mountain with mountains in tradition, perhaps there is the most to be said for Sinai.

The verb used for the Transfiguration itself, μεταμορφώω, does not help us much in the interpretation of what took place. In Classical Greek there is a document from the first century B.C. which uses the verb for being transformed εἰς θηρίων ἰδεῖν.<sup>36</sup> In the New Testament it describes a change in form, but does not describe the nature of the change.<sup>37</sup>

The account continues that His garments became glistening, exceedingly white". σπλιγσω, a form of which we have translated "glistening" is used in Classical Greek for the glitter or gleam of polished surfaces.<sup>38</sup> In the LXX it translates the Hebrew words,<sup>39</sup>  $\aleph \bar{\imath} \bar{\imath}$  which means a flame or the flashing point of a spear,<sup>40</sup>  $\aleph \eta \eta$  which means to gleam or glitter,<sup>41</sup> and  $\bar{\imath} \bar{\imath} \bar{\imath}$  which is used to describe burnished brass.<sup>42</sup> Apparently Mark intends that the clothes were whitely shining in an unusual way. In Matt. 17:2 Jesus' face also shone, and in Luke 9:29 not only His clothes but also, "the appearance of his countenance was altered". Before making a decision as to the meaning of this startling appearance we should note that λευκός (white), which appears in this phrase, is elsewhere in the New Testament applied to clothing only with reference to the clothing of angels (Matt. 28:3; Mark 16:5; John 20:12; Acts 1:10) or to the garments of saints in glory (Rev. 3:4,5,18; 4:4; 6:11; 7:9,13).

It seems likely that Mark intends something specific by Jesus' transformed appearance. We have noted that it may have some connection with Moses' shining face in Ex. 34:29. This is especially possible with regard to Matt. who says that Christ's face also shone. Perhaps Luke gives the best interpretation of what is meant when he links this transformed appearance of Christ to His glory (19:32). Jewish eschatology is rich in references to the δόξα of the Messiah (I En. 49:2; 61:8; II Bar. 30:1), and in Dan. 7:9 the "raiment" of the Son of Man is "white as snow". Similar words are used to describe the saved (II Bar. 51:10, 12; 4 Ezra 7:97; Dan. 12:3; En. 38:4; 50:1; 62:15).

The term *δόξα* is also caught up by Christian eschatology and Boobyer has shown that wherever the term is used elsewhere in the Synoptics, with the exception of Luke 2:9, it is used with reference to the Parousia (Mark 8:38; 10:37; 13:26; Matt. 16:27; 19:28, 24:30; 25:31; Luke 9:26; 21:27 and 24:26) It seems unquestionable that the transfigured appearance of Christ has significance in both Jewish and Christian eschatology.

This section of our passage ends with the appearance of Moses and Elijah. Interpreters often see the role of Moses and Elijah in our passage as simply representing the law and the prophets. Braddock writes, "Moses is naturally assumed to represent the law, and the phrase 'the law and the prophets is so familiar that it is assumed almost as a necessary corollary that Elijah represents the prophets'.<sup>43</sup> The significance of their appearance is then seen to be that of pointing to Jesus as the fulfillment of the whole Old Testament tradition.<sup>44</sup>

It seems likely, however, that we can be more specific than this in our identification of the role of Moses and Elijah in the Transfiguration. Many Old Testament heroes are expected in Jewish eschatology to appear at the coming of the Messiah, e.g., Ezra (4 Ezra 14:9), Baruch (2 Bar. 76:2), Jeremiah (2 Macc. 2:1), Enoch, Noah, Sherm, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Test. Benj. 10:5,6). A tradition developed that Elijah (II Kings 2:1) and Moses (The Assumption of Moses--perhaps based on Deut. 34:6 which says of Moses that "no one saw his grave") were translated into Heaven without death. Perhaps for this reason they play a special role in Jewish eschatology.

Elijah appears as an eschatological figure in Mal. 4:5, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes". In the case of Moses, Lohmeyer cites a quotation from Jochanan ben Sakkai in which God says to Moses, "Wenn ich den Propheten Elias senden werde, sollt Ihr beide zusammenkommen".<sup>45</sup> But that passage is of an uncertain date. Foakes Jackson and Lake point out that the Samaritans, basing their hopes on Deut. 18:10ff. and 34:10, expected the return of Moses.<sup>46</sup> And there may be some eschatological implications when he is called *מֹשֶׁה בְּעוֹד* in Dan. 9:11, although this may be pushing evidence too far.

Traces of the expectation of the return of Elijah appear in the New Testament in such passages as Mark 6:15; 8:28; 9:11; 15:35f.; Matt. 11:14; 16:14 and John 1:21. And some scholars believe that the two witnesses of Rev. 11:3-18 are to be taken as Elijah and Moses.<sup>47</sup> If this is the case then the two figures can be attributed a role in early Christian eschatology.

If our attempt to link the Transfiguration with the Sinai experience of Moses is correct then Jesus is taken as the new Moses who will again lead his people in triumph. The traces of Jewish eschatology in Mark's account of the Transfiguration cannot be denied.

The event stands as divine confirmation of what Peter confessed at Caesarea Philippi. The messianic role of Jesus and his glory is made manifest to the three chosen apostles, and, if Riesenfeld is correct, His divine kingship is proclaimed.

Nor is it strange that we should find these same elements appearing in early Christian eschatology and find early Christian tradition interpreting the Transfiguration in terms of Christ's Parousia. It is natural that many elements of Jewish eschatology should find their way into the eschatological thinking of the early Christian community. We have found that nearly all the elements in the story can be found in both Jewish and Christian eschatological thought.

As to which of these aspects (the proclamation of Jesus' messiahship or the prefiguration of His Parousia) is primary we cannot say with assurance. To us it appears that both are there. Perhaps we are confronted with the familiar tension between "realized" and "futuristic" eschatology. We will see that the remaining portions of the Transfiguration account seem to make sense only if both elements are taken to be implied by the passage. Christ is proclaimed as the Messiah who has come and who will return to consummate the Kingdom which has already begun in Him. The glory of God in Christ has broken into the world, yet its fulfillment awaits the future.

#### The Impatience of Man

And Peter responding says to Jesus, 'Master, it is good that we are here and let us make three tabernacles, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah'. For he did not know what to respond for they became afraid. (Mark 9:5,6)

Riesenfeld, of course, sees Peter's suggestion that the apostles should build tabernacles for Jesus, Moses and Elijah as an Enthronement. But even if his theory is rejected, the offer has much the same meaning. The Feast of the Tabernacles seems to have taken on eschatological dimension in Zech. 14:16-21. So even if the theory of an Enthronement festival is rejected, much the same point can be made on the basis of the Feast of the Tabernacles. Further, references to tabernacles abound in Jewish eschatology. Jahweh had tabernacled with His people of old (Ex. 33:7-11; Num. 12:5,10; Deut. 31:14,15; Num. 11:24,26). The people looked forward to the time when He would again tabernacle with them (Ezek. 37:27; 43:7-9; Joel 3:21; Zech. 2:10 f.; 8:3,8; Tob. 13:10).

This line also finds its way into early Christian eschatology. God has His  $\sigma\kappa\eta\tau\eta$  in Heaven (Rev. 13:6 cf. Heb. 8,9), and will have it among men (Rev. 21:3). Peter's offer, then, is to enthrone the Lord and proclaim his divine kingship (Riesenfeld), or to build the tabernacles proclaiming God's presence once more among men and to fulfill the glory of His Son the Messiah.



Why then does Mark seem to rebuke Peter for his response? According to Halford Luccock, "Behind his (Peter's) words there is the desire to prolong the experience".<sup>48</sup> Peter's mistake is that he wishes to remain caught up in such a glorious experiences. But such an interpretation seems to be more dependent on romantic thought than on the New Testament.

A better clue can be found if we consider Mark's statement that, "he (Peter) did not know what to respond for they became afraid". Why should the three apostles be afraid? This is Mark's only use of the term, *ἐκφοβος* (to fear). But another related verb for fear, *φοβεσθαι* is used more often. The most important uses of the term for our purposes are those where the term relates to Jesus and his followers. In 4:41 and 6:50 Jesus' disciples are said to be afraid when he stills the storms. In 5:15 his followers are afraid at the healing of the demoniac. In 5:33 the woman with a flow of blood is afraid after her cure. In 9:32 the disciples are afraid when they hear that the Son of Man must suffer. In 10:32 the followers are afraid when they learn that in the Kingdom the first shall be last and the last first. Finally, in 16:8 the women are afraid after the discovery of the empty tomb. As Riesenfeld says of the disciples, "Leur crainte est rapportée dans l'intention de faire ressortir un manque de foi, l'incapacité de comprendre la portée messianique des paroles et des acts de Jesus".<sup>49</sup> They are afraid when they confront the mystery of Christ's messianic acts. And, more important to us, they are afraid when they confront the necessity of messianic suffering (9:32; 10:32).

Much the same results are yielded if we survey the other instances where Peter seems to come in for criticism in Mark. In 10:28, after Christ's description of the difficulty involved in entering the Kingdom of God, Peter responds, "Lo, we have left everything and followed you," as if to say he had done enough to achieve entrance. He fails to understand the radical nature of the sacrifice which he is called to make, and what Jesus says in verse 27 about the impossibility of man making such a sacrifice on his own. Again in 14:66 ff. Peter refuses to take the path of suffering and denies Christ.

Two of the instances where Peter seems open for criticism for his lack of understanding may have special connections with our passage. In 8:32 after His confession, Peter "began to rebuke" Christ for predicting His suffering. Since the position in Mark's Gospel of Peter's confession and the Transfiguration seems to make the latter the divine confirmation of the former, it would be natural for Peter to make the same mistake in both passages. In 8:28 it is Peter's complete unwillingness to accept the necessity of messianic suffering that calls forth the anger of Jesus.

Riesenfeld points to the relationship between our passage and the Gethesemane incident.<sup>50</sup> Both involve Peter, James and John. Both are set on mountains. Just as Peter "does not know what to

respond to Him" in our passage, in the Gethsemane account "they (Peter, James and John) did not know what to respond to Him". (14:40) Here Peter goes to sleep in the face of suffering (14:37, 40, 41). In all these instances, then, including the two which seem especially related to our passage, Peter's failure consists in his refusal to accept messianic suffering.

When Jesus' followers become afraid, it is usually fear of his messianic acts or messianic suffering. When Peter appears to be open for criticism in other passages it is due to his failure to accept the necessity of messianic suffering. We should note here that Bernardin believes that the appearance of Moses and Elijah in our passage is used to point to messianic suffering,<sup>51</sup> but he presents no real evidence for his view. But even if we reject Bernardin's theory, when we add to the observations we have just made about the source of fear on the part of followers of Jesus and the nature of Peter's failures in other passages, the implications which we noted in our exegesis of the first section of our passage may be implied by the verb, ἀναφέρω, and what we there noted about the nature of the mission to which the three apostles are called, Peter's response becomes clear. Once again he refuses to accept the necessity of messianic suffering. He wishes to enthrone Christ and to proclaim His lordship and glory now. Or he wishes to tabernacle God and bring in the glory of the last days now. In his impatience, Peter fails to remember that this can happen only in God's time, when He constructs, "a tabernacle not made with men's hands".<sup>52</sup> And Peter fails to accept the fact that the chosen path to that glory is the path of suffering. Peter does not "know what to respond" for he is afraid of the role of suffering and refuses to accept the fact that the Messiah must also suffer.<sup>53</sup>

It is for this reason that we believe that Transfiguration must in some sense point to future glory. Peter's fear and his response appear to make sense only if this is so. It is Peter's impatience and fear of suffering which cause him to respond as he does. He wants to take the matter into his own hands, to tabernacle God on his terms, to bring the glory and lordship of Christ now, for he fears the messianic suffering which Jesus has recognized as the key to His mission.

### The Assurance of God in Christ

And a cloud came overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud, 'This is my Son the Beloved. Listen to Him'. And suddenly, looking around, they saw no one except Jesus alone with them. (9:7,8)

The term cloud (νεφέλη) is another loaded term. Even in Classical Greek νεφέλη took on supernatural significance. There are references to clouds of sorrow and of death.<sup>54\*</sup> In the J.E. material in the Pentateuch יָיָהּ becomes a sign of the presence of Jahweh which leads the Israelites on their journey (Ex. 13:21,22;

\* In the LXX νεφέλη usually translates the Hebrew יָיָהּ. 55

34:5; 14:20; 19:9; 33:7-11; Num. 10:34; 11:25; 14:14; Deut. 1:33; 4:11; 5:19, etc.). As in our passage, Jahweh often speaks out of a cloud (Ex. 24:16; 34:4-7; Num. 12:5-8; Deut. 13:15-21).

Perhaps we should understand the cloud to be no more than a sign of God's presence, but there are also passages which link clouds with Jewish eschatology. In Dan. 7:13 a cloud appears in connection with the coming of the Son of Man. In 4 Ezra 13:3 a cloud serves as transportation for the Man from the Sea. In 2 Bar. 53:1-12 and in 2 Macc. 2:7,8 clouds appear in passages which obviously refer to the glory of the last days. And Moulton and Milligan cite evidence that the later Jews called the Messiah the Son of the Cloud.<sup>56</sup>

As is the case with so many of the elements of Jewish eschatology which we have seen reflected in our passage, the presence of clouds is taken over by early Christian eschatological thought. The Son of Man will return on clouds according to such passages as Matt. 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; 14:62; Luke 21:27 and Rev. 1:7. And, "we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air". (1 Thess. 4:17) Also Riesenfeld calls attention to the cloud in Acts 1:9 in the account of the ascension, which, as we have seen, Davies argues is connected by Luke to the Transfiguration. We should finally recall what we have said earlier about the cloud and the voice from the cloud in the account of Moses on Sinai as one of the elements which are common to that story and our passage, and which may imply that Mark viewed Jesus as the New Moses who would lead His people to new glory.

The presence of the cloud in both Jewish and Christian eschatology strengthens our contention that the Transfiguration has eschatological significance and is both a fulfillment of Jewish eschatology and a prefiguration of the Christian Parousia.

In the midst of the fear expressed in verse 6, comes a voice of assurance from the cloud saying, "This is my Son the Beloved. Listen to Him". Mark may have had in mind Psalm 2:7 when writing the first part of this quote or perhaps Gen. 22:2 if our interpretation of the implied suffering in this passage is correct. Branscomb suggests that the second half of the sentence is based on Deut. 18:15, but the phrase is too short for us to make absolute identification.

More important is the pivotal nature of the disclosure which is made. Jesus is called Son of God six times in the Gospel, and only five if we omit that phrase from the title as do many important MSS. In 1:11 a voice from Heaven says to Jesus, *οὗ ἐστὶς υἱὸς μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν οὐραῖς ἐνδόξῃσιν*. The use of the second person singular seems to indicate that the disclosure is made privately to Jesus. At the very beginning of Mark's Gospel, Jesus is made aware of His mission as Son of God.

The next two times Jesus is called Son of God, He is given the title by evil spirits. (3:11 and 5:7). These supernatural beings seem to know His identity, but so far as man is concerned, it remains unknown. So far only Jesus (and these supernatural spirits) are aware of His true significance.

The next mention of Jesus as Son of God is in the passage before us. As we have seen the voice says, οὗτος ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς μου ὁ ἀγαπῶντος, ὁ καὶ ἐκ ἐμοῦ ἐστὶν. The first part of the quotation is the same as that at baptism except for the subtle change from the second person singular "you are" (σὺ εἶ) to the third singular "this is" (οὗτος ἐστίν). Instead of being a purely private message as was the case at baptism, the disclosure of Jesus' divine sonship is now made to the inner group of disciples whom we discussed earlier. Note also that this is almost exactly the mid-point of Mark's gospel. At the beginning, the nature of Christ's mission was made known to Him. Now the circle of those who know Him as Son of God is widened to include the three intimate disciples.

The final reference to Jesus as Son of God comes near the end of Mark's Gospel. This time the centurion at the crucifixion says, "Truly this man was a Son of God!" (15:39) Now a complete outsider has learned of Jesus' divine sonship. We have gone from a private disclosure of His sonship to Jesus himself, through a disclosure to the three inner disciples in our passage, to the knowledge of Jesus' role by an outsider.<sup>57</sup>

It is for this reason that we are inclined to reject attempts to view the Transfiguration as a misplaced resurrection story. The progressive disclosure of Jesus' sonship, with key points coming at the beginning, middle, and near the end of the Gospel seems too effective to be mere chance. At least for Mark the Transfiguration belongs where it appears in the text.

For our interpretation of the passage the important thing to notice is that this phrase is the only answer which is given to the fear of verse 6. The voice merely points to Christ as Son of God and commands the disciples to listen to Him. This can be understood only if we view the eschaton as partially realized in Christ. We have seen that for the total interpretation of the story it must in part point to future glory. But the reason why Christ as Son of God can be assurance is that the glory has begun in Him in the present. He who is to come has come. The Kingdom which is to be fulfilled in the future has begun now.

If our interpretation of the previous portion of the passage is correct, the command to listen to Christ may be a charge to hear His words about messianic suffering. It is perhaps significant that the next words spoken by Jesus to the disciples after a charge to them to be silent concerning what they had seen include a reference to suffering. "Elijah does come first to restore all things; and how is it written of the Son of man, that he should



suffer many things and be treated with contempt?" (9:12)

The passage comes to a close with the observation that, "suddenly, looking around, they saw no one except Jesus alone with them". He is the only assurance the three disciples are given. In Him the future glory has broken into history. They can face the suffering to which they are called because He suffers with them, and indeed, takes their suffering upon Himself.

It is now clear why we have held, against those who see the Transfiguration as a misplaced resurrection appearance, that the passage fits well into its present context. Mark has concluded chapter 8 with Christ's challenge, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me," (8:35) and with Christ's saying about those who are ashamed of Him and His words. Is not Peter, in our account, seen to be an example of those who are ashamed of Jesus' words concerning the suffering which He, as Messiah, must face? Then in 9:1 Mark has Christ say, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power". Is not Peter again, in our passage, an example of one who is shown the glory of God in Christ breaking into the world even now so that messianic suffering no longer needs to be a source of embarrassment but of triumph? As in its context, the dual themes of suffering and glory are joined in the event of Transfiguration.

### III

#### CONCLUSION

We have combined the third and fourth positions described in the opening section of the paper. The Transfiguration both points to the fulfillment of Jewish eschatological hope which has begun in Christ, and prefigures the Parousia when His glory will be fully manifested. We have rejected attempts to read the Transfiguration as a misplaced resurrection story. But we can accept those interpretations which see the Transfiguration as pointing forward to the Resurrection and Ascension in so far as these events are taken into the context of the whole theme of Christ's coming glory which is prefigured by the Transfigured Christ. In a certain sense then, our interpretation has the merit of also being able to take into account themes from the first two interpretations of the Transfiguration which we outlined.

The Transfiguration points to the glory of God in Christ, which both has come and is yet to come. This glory is inaugurated in the coming of Christ into the world. Yet such glory can be brought to fulfillment only through the hard path of the suffering on the cross and suffering yet to come. This glory is no cheap solution which furnishes painless answers to the problems of existence. It costs. It can be won only through the suffering of the Messiah and the suffering to which we are called in His name.

The Transfiguration points to the impatience of man. We are embarrassed by the suffering of Christ. With Peter we fear the suffering to which we are called. With him we try to take matters into our own hands. We grow impatient with God and call for the glory now.

The Transfiguration, however, also points to the assurance of God in Christ. Even in our impatience and fear He does not abandon us. In Christ we are assured that the important battle has been fought and won and that the final victory will belong to God. We can accept the suffering of Christ for it is not defeat but victory. We can accept the suffering to which we are called for He has suffered with and for us. The Transfigured Christ meets us pointing the way to victory through suffering, and He indeed marches before us along that way.

#### FOOTNOTES

1 Bultmann, Rudolf, Die Geschichte der Synoptischen Tradition (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1921) p. 157.

Cf. Theology of the New Testament Vol. I (New York, Scribner, 1954) p. 27.

2 See Goguel, Maurice, The Life of Jesus (New York, Macmillan, 1944) p. 343 and "Esquisse d'une interprétation du récit de la transfiguration", Review de L'Histoire des Religions, 81 (1920) p. 157.

3 Ramsey, Arthur Michael, The Glory of God and the Transfiguration of Christ (New York, Longmans, 1949) p. 102.

4 Cited by Clarke, William Kemp Lawther, New Testament Problems (London, SPCK, 1929) p. 34.

5 See also the arguments against such a view in Boobyer, George Henry, St. Mark and the Transfiguration Story (Edinburgh, Clark, 1942) p. 13.

6 James, M. R., The Apocryphal New Testament (Oxford, Clarendon, 1955) pp. 511-21. The Transfiguration is also a post resurrection event in the Pistis Sophia, Doc. I. 4a-8b.

7 Boobyer, op. cit., pp. 14f.

8 Davies, John G., He Ascended into Heaven (London, Lutterworth, 1953) pp. 39 ff.

9 Ibid., p. 41.

10 Bernardin, Joseph B., "The Transfiguration", Journal of Biblical Literature, 52 (1933) p. 189.

11 Lohmeyer, Ernst, "Die Verklarung Jesu nach dem Markus-

Evangelium", Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentlich Wissenschaft, 21 (1922) p. 200.

12 Ibid., pp. 205 ff.

13 Lohmeyer, Ernst, Das Evangelium des Markus (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1937) pp. 173-81.

14 Lohmeyer, "Die Verklärung", op. cit., p. 202.

15 Riesenfeld, Harald, Jésus Transfiguré (Lund, Hakan Ohlssons, 1947) p. 265.

16 Ramsey, op. cit., p. 103 n.2.

17 Grant, Frederick C., An Introduction of New Testament (New York, Abingdon, 1950) p. 225.

18 Boobyer op. cit. See also "St. Mark and the Transfiguration", Journal of Theological Studies, 41 (1940) pp. 119-140.

19 See the discussion of this epistle in McNeile, A. H., An Introduction to the Study of the New Testament (Oxford, Clarendon, 2nd ed. 1953) pp. 244ff.

20 For a more complete discussion of the eschatological elements in the Transfiguration account in II Peter see Boobyer, St. Mark and the Transfiguration Story, op. cit., pp. 43-47.

21 James, op. cit., p. 510.

22 Ibid., p. 511.

23 Boobyer, St. Mark and the Transfiguration Story, op. cit., pp. 30-40. Also note that Boobyer argues that according to the Muratorian Fragment, the Apocalypse of Peter was accepted as canonical by Rome. He feels that since Rome may have been the place of the composition of Mark that the interpretation of the Transfiguration in the apocalypse is an especially valuable clue to its interpretation in Mark.

24 Origen's Commentary on Matthew book XII, 31.

25 In Richardson, Alan, A Theological Word Book of the Bible (New York, Macmillan, 1958) p. 269. See also the similar treatment in Schniewind, Julius, Das Evangelium nach Markus (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1952) p. 122.

26 Ramsey, op. cit., p. 119.

27 Bacon, Benjamin Wisner, "After Six Days", Harvard Theological Review, 8 (1915) pp. 94-121.

28 Goguel, The Life of Jesus, op. cit., p. 343 n.4.

29 Ibid., p. 343.

30 The tradition that Peter died a martyr is well known. Papias quoted by Eusebius records the martyrdom of John. If James has been confused with James the brother of Jesus a tradition of his martyrdom is recorded by Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, XX.9.1. Some scholars find hints of the martyrdom of James and John in Mark 10:35-39; 9:38-40 and Luke 9:54-56.

31 Hatch, Edwin and Henry A. Redpath, A Concordance to the Septuagint (Oxford, Clarendon, 1897) pp. 84,5.

32 Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (Oxford, Clarendon, 1957) p. 749.

33 Ibid., 883.

34 Arndt, William F. and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Chicago, U of Chicago Press, 1957) p. 62.

35 Hence Lohmeyer concludes, "ist sonst ein kultisches Wort für die Darbringung von Opfern". (Das Evangelium des Markus, op. cit., p.174 n. 2.)

36 Diodorus Siculus, Historicus, Bekker, Dindorf and Vogel, ed. Leipzig 1888-1906. Cited by Liddell, Henry George and Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon (Oxford, Clarendon, 1940) p. 1114.

37 Arndt and Gingrich, op. cit., p. 513. See also Ramsey who says, "The word, tells of a profound change of form (in contrast with mere appearance), without describing its character". (op. cit., p. 114).

38 Liddell and Scott, op. cit., p. 1645.

39 Hatch and Redpath, op. cit., p. 1291.

40 Brown, Driver and Briggs, op. cit., p. 529.

41 Ibid., p. 843.

42 Ibid., p. 887.

43 Bradcock, F. J., "The Transfiguration", Journal of Theological Studies, 22 (1921) p. 321.

44 See, for example, Ronald Preston's statement that, "The law and the prophets are at the same time fulfilled and superseded and the representative forebears agree that it is so, and witness that it is in Jesus, the Messiah, the divine Son, that God's



revelation is now to be seen". (In Alan Richardson, op. cit., pp. 268,9).

45 Cited by Lohmeyer, "Die Verklärung Jesu..." op. cit., p. 189.

46 Foakes Jackson, T. J. and Kirsopp Lake, The Beginnings of Christianity (London: Macmillan, 1920) pp. 404-6.

47 Branscomb, B. Harvie. The Gospel of Mark, Moffatt Series (London, Hodder and Stroughton, 1937) p. 162; Boobyer, St. Mark and The Transfiguration Story, op. cit., p. 72; "St. Mark and the Transfiguration", op. cit., p. 132

48 In Buttrick, George Arthur, ed. The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. VII (New York, Abingdon, 1951) p. 776.

49 Riesenfeld, op. cit., p. 285.

50 Ibid., p. 282.

51 Bernardin, op. cit.

52 Apocalypse of Peter, James, op. cit., p. 519.

53 Along this line Alan Richardson writes, "...Peter did not yet fully understand; he did not yet realize that the Christ must suffer...." (An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament (London, SCM, 1958) p. 183).

54 Liddell and Scott, op. cit., p. 1171.

55 Hatch and Redpath, op. cit., p. 943.

56 Moulton, James Hope and George Milligan. The Vocabularly of the Greek New Testament Illustrated from the Papyri and other Non-Literary Sources (London: Hodder and Storughton, 1930) p. 425.

57 For the observation concerning the way in which Mark shows the progressive recognition of the significance of Jesus through his use of the title "Son of God", I am indebted to Beazley, George G., Jr. Portraits of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark (Unpublished).

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## FAULKNER'S PASSION NOVEL

George G. Beazley, Jr.

First Christian Church, Bartlesville, Oklahoma

In 1954 was published one of the greatest commentaries ever written on the events that Christians consider central for understanding the revelation of God's purpose to man and for lifting man from the confusion of his natural condition to the peace of one who is experiencing in his life the salvation that God desires to give to all. Yet this commentary will never be read by many ministers, will be misunderstood by others who do read it, and is not likely to ever become a text studied in our seminaries. I speak, of course, of William Faulkner's significant novel, A Fable.

The word "commentary" has been chosen deliberately, for this book, like all works of art, is a commentary, not an exegesis. An exegesis expounds the meaning of the records of an event or of a work of literature. It seeks to see the sentences in the context of their environment, to elucidate words deriving their meaning from vanished situations, to explain the meaning of the text, to make it clear. An exegesis is a work of scholarship and of reason. A commentary is not too concerned with the earlier form. It seeks to re-live the event, perhaps under other forms. It seeks to enter into the serenity or the anguish that it had when it was coming into being. It wishes not so much to outline the event and its meaning as to give it back the dynamism it had when it was happening. The tools of the commentator are not scholarship and reason but sympathy and imagination. To comment on the Passion Week is the aim of Faulkner, and far better than any who have tried this before, he has succeeded. Not perfectly--no one can do that--but far better than others, for he, above all other authors, is the one who can make his readers not observe his characters, but be them.

Many have assayed to retell this most important of stories, and most have failed miserably. Sometimes they have failed because they have set the story inside another story, so that Jesus and his sacrifice have ceased to be central. These authors have become so involved in the revenge of their Ben Hur or so concerned with the spiritual struggle of their Marcellus that the divine event becomes merely the mainspring for moving some secular action. Sometimes they have failed because they have filled in the gaps in our written gospels and have thereby destroyed the stark simplicity of tragedy which is one of the evangelists' most powerful, if unconscious, literary devices for making us feel the religious importance of this secularly unimportant event.

Faulkner makes neither of these mistakes. He avoids the latter by transposing the event into the twentieth century, where his involved emotional orchestration will not be out of place and where he can use his tried and proven literary style to its fullest; for no modern writer can ever hope to achieve the sincere and artless simplicity of the Gospel according to Mark. He avoids the



former mistake by making his corporal (who is the symbol of Jesus) the central and dominating character of the book, for even in those passages when he does not appear as a character, we are always conscious that the corporal and the event which he has precipitated are the things that give meaning to everything else. The result is that Faulkner's "fable" gives us insights into man's dilemma when he is both immersed in his world and confronted by his savior that have been equalled by few theologians, exegetes, or preachers and that have never been surpassed by any novelist that has attempted to comment on the meaning of this event of events.

No one can pretend that Faulkner is an easy author to read. His prose is filled with the moving bombast of Southern oratory as well as with the anguish of one who has felt disillusionment and who, in his solitariness, has sought for the answer to the violence and miscarriage of justice that he has observed around him. Many would never have expected Faulkner to be attracted to the New Testament. He has been an author who has created tale after tale of war, lust, rape, murder, and mob violence. His characters are generally ones we should not care to welcome into our homes to meet our wives and to dandle our children on their knees. Joe Christmas seeking to escape the curse of his mixed blood, the raped Temple Drake fascinated by her sin like a bird by a snake, Jason Compson rejoicing in his callousness, Colonel Sutpen driving toward his objective with the fated self-destruction of a character from Greek tragedy, even the gently cynical character, sometimes called Gavin Stephens, sometimes Horace Benbow ineffective in his devotion to justice. We should not care to make bosom companions of these twisted and thwarted people, but even when seeing them in the midst of their sin, we cannot but admire their vitality.

In the midst of Faulkner's terrifying gallery of portraits and violent plots, we cannot but see his faith in man. He, rather than T. S. Eliot, maintains the tradition of the American affirmation (seen before in Hawthorne and Twain) that with all his bitterness, meanness, foolishness, and rapine, man has within him a force that is not defeated either by the circumstances without or by his sins within, a force that strives and seeks even though it does not find, and that finds its realization in action, not in the disillusionment of a talkative cocktail party.

Many would never have expected that Faulkner would have been attracted to the New Testament; yet isn't this exactly where we should have expected him to be attracted? Certainly the Biblical story is full of violence, rapine, and lust. The David of the Samuel books would not be welcomed into our homes to meet our wives lest they might become Abagails or Bathshebas, and few of us tell our children the story of Judah and Tamar. Even the New Testament knows its Magdalene and the woman taken in adultery, and countless masses and peace-of-mind sermons have not been able to remove the violence from the crucifixion or from the stoning of Stephen. It is true that the world Faulkner writes about is a violent and unpleasant one, but so was the world of Aeschylus and Euripides, of Shakespeare

and Webster, of Hawthorne and Melville. Indeed, so is the world of Dachau, Hiroshima, and Heartbreak Ridge. Life is not always pleasant, but it is always dynamic. Men remain victims of their lusts and yet rise above them. So Faulkner has found his world and the Christian Bible and has related them with few dogmas but many suggestions, and A Fable is the result.

It would be as futile to retell the plot of A Fable as to attempt to describe VanGogh's Sunflowers or to catch in outline Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. A work of art is created to be seen, to be heard, to be read, to be experienced, not to be talked about. The story is simple. A corporal persuades a regiment to refuse to attack, stops a war, and is executed for treason with the approval of the people he had tried to save. It's all there: the two thieves, Mary Magdalene, the crown of thorns, Peter and Judas, and the resurrection--even Paul--sometimes in a different form--but there none the less, and, what is most amazing, told with the utmost reverence and without the effect of contrivance. Through it all runs a penetrating insight into the dilemma of man, the trying temptation of Gethsemane, and the reason for the necessity of the cross.

The high point, as all have observed, is the scene between the corporal and the general--between Jesus and God some have thought, but I am not at all sure. It seems to me it is more nearly between man in his created world and Jesus, between the ideas of adaptation to environment and of revolt toward heaven, between man's precariously achieved civilization and the hopes and passions that would burst it apart, sometimes in the form of lust, but here in the form of overwhelming compassion and love. This scene has been compared with Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor scene in The Brothers Karamazov and justifiably so. Some have called Faulkner America's existentialist novelist, and certainly this scene is a powerful exposition of man's condition when he faces the civilization that he has dragged so painfully from primitive barbarism and then finds himself confronted by a Christ who insists that man can be separated from his folly, even as that folly takes his life. Faulkner is not a conventional Christian, and one cannot say his novel is a document of the Christian faith, but in his honest puzzlement, in his presentation of the stark opposites of meliorism and the folly of the cross gives more faith than in half the creeds.

Read A Fable; reread it. You may not find answers, but you will see more clearly the questions to which we must seek to relate God's answer in his Word, Jesus Christ.







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# THE SCROLL

The Journal of the Campbell Institute

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## THE "CONTINUING EDUCATION" OF THE MINISTRY

Parker Rossman

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Dear Reader:

Though somewhat late (and this is almost a tradition with "The Scroll"), you have in your hands the summer issue of our magazine of Christian discussion. You will notice that it is number one of volume fifty-two. To live fifty-two years in a world where the life-expectancy of magazines is not high is an accomplishment. To have served a useful purpose during those fifty-two years is an even higher one. To be healthy and to have a reasonable life-expectancy for a number of years to come is even more unusual.

I believe this issue of "The Scroll" contains much that will interest you, its readers and those from whom its lifeblood (both financial and intellectual) comes. We begin with an article by George Earle Owen on one of the recent consultations on internal disunity. Since he was present as a very active participant, he speaks with real existential concern on this issue. Many of you must be wondering whether or not these meetings are serving any useful purpose and, if so, what. His article may help you to decide. Or it may make you write an answering article for "The Scroll". Either way, it will have fulfilled its purpose.

Following this penetrating article are two in our series on the future of our brotherhood. Two more of those who have served us faithfully and well for many years, Dr. W. E. Garrison and Dr. Homer W. Carpenter, have answered our request for their evaluation of the past and prognosis for the years to come. Each article well expresses the individuality of men worth knowing. Peruse them carefully.

At my request Darrell Wolfe has tried to give us some insight into the books which Bethany Press is publishing and hopes to publish. This article should be interesting to all Disciples but especially to the members of the Campbell Institute who have the itch to write that others may read. It is a very helpful analysis of the books you can expect to publish and the book needs in our brotherhood that ought to be met.

The final article by Parker Rossman tells of the fascinating experiment in continuing education which the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) have under way. Campbell Institute members are certainly the kind of people who will be interested in this venture. I am glad I asked Parker to do this article, because I believe you will be glad to read it.

At the end are two important announcements. Read them first, then write out your check for this year's dues. After that you can return to the articles with greater enjoyment and look forward to the International Convention with great anticipation.

Yours for discussion,

*George*

## FREEDOM FAITH AND FELLOWSHIP

George Earle Owen  
United Christian Missionary Society  
Indianapolis, Indiana

(Report on the Second Wichita Consultation on  
Disunity Among the Disciples of Christ.)

### By the Way of Preface

Freedom is man's most precious possession. It is also his most dangerous possession. It is both a gift and an achievement. It is this gift of God that makes man a moral creature. To violate this inalienable (not alien in a moral universe) right is to run contrary to creative purpose of God, something even God will not do. Freedom is also hammered out of man's experience and as such it is culturally, politically, and even religiously conditioned. As such it is an achievement. The Disciples of Christ have achieved by congregational government a great deal of freedom. One consequence has been the loss or lack of real responsibility and maturity as a brotherhood and a fragmented fellowship. A basic question or area for further discussion in the context unity and disunity is the nature of the freedom we possess.

Given freedom, faith and love are the only really satisfactory moral responses free, moral, and responsible (an acknowledged tautology) creatures can make to one another. Men live and respond to one another in terms of their basic beliefs and faith. Faith brings men together and it also separates men. Adherence to certain beliefs, interpretations of the Bible, and traditions lead some Disciples to patterns of independency, others to patterns of cooperation. Any discussion of the problems that separate and unite us must center in the beliefs that pull us apart and the beliefs that hold us together. This means further study of the nature of the church, of the unity we seek, of authority, the Bible, and the like that serve as the frame of reference and assumptions upon which our beliefs are based.

My own address or paper on "Unity and Diversity Among Cooperatives" was structured along this line. It dealt with the nature of the following: the Church, democracy, freedom, community, Christian unity, organization, cooperation, neutrality, stewardship, truth, and authority. Then followed the corresponding principles: of rediscovery (instead of reformation), of representation, of self-criticism, of ecumenicity of unification, of expediency or need, of leadership, of Christian witness, of responsibility, of integrity, and of respect for personality. This, of course, represents something of the spectrum of my own colored philosophy.

At the heart of our Christian religion and of the Church is the concept of fellowship--"I-Thou" relationships, worship, communion, brotherhood and the like. Whatever violates Christian



fellowship violates all these areas of human and divine relationships. What are the boundaries of Christian fellowship? To what extent should what one believes be made a test of fellowship? These and similar questions led me to entitle this report as I did.

### Why, Who and What

In response to the request of the editor of The Scroll I am glad to report on this consultation and add my assessment of its character and value. The readers of The Scroll may be interested to know why such a three day encounter of independents and cooperatives was held as well as something about its program and personnel. The first Wichita Consultation was called as a result of the Area Consultations on Christian Unity sponsored by the Council on Christian Unity and the Division of Home Mission and the Division of World Mission of the United Christian Missionary Society.

Both the Wichita Consultations were also held in part to help some of the brethren in Kansas and Oklahoma ascertain the place and role of independent pastors and groups in the organized life of our brotherhood. Influential in calling this consultation were some of the faculty of Manhattan Bible College, which is hovering between independency and cooperation. In a state planning conference in Kansas prior to both the Wichita meetings this question arose: could Manhattan Bible College join the Kansas Christian Missionary Society in its Decade of Decision askings and program without identifying itself with the cooperative agencies and church? This means supporting all the agencies in Unified Promotion.

This is the problem all independent churches and groups face: can they buy the values of cooperation without paying the price? Can independents have the advantages of cooperation without their responsibilities? State leaders in Kansas and Oklahoma, where a laissez faire attitude toward this issue has prevailed for so long, are dissatisfied with it. Neutrality is no longer tenable or practical.

It is interesting that the following states were represented in this conference: Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, D.C. and Virginia. Of the 225 registered for the conference, 179 were from outside of Wichita. It is significant that there were 114 ministers in this conference, 6 college professors, 7 state and national staff members, 1 chaplain, 2 missionaries, and 8 ministers' wives. It was originally intended that this would be a rather "top level" conference and so the laity were not represented. One of Dr. Donald McGavran's statements to the group was that this division is caused largely by ministers and not by the laity. One layman observed that the laity of the churches is caught up in a gigantic tug-of-war between independents and cooperatives.

The program was fairly well divided between cooperative and independent representatives. Dr. C. K. Thomas of Phillips

University had four addresses on "The Nature of the Church." The writer was asked to speak on "Unity and Diversity Among Cooperatives" to be followed by an address by Dr. Charles Gresham on "Unity and Diversity Among Independents." Likewise, I was asked to speak on "The Reason for and the Position of The United Christian Missionary Society," to be followed by a statement by Woodrow Phillips of Czark Bible College on "The Reason for and Position of Direct Support Missions." Dr. Dean Walker of Milligan College spoke on the "Prospects of a Divided Brotherhood," while Dr. A. Dale Fiers of the United Society spoke on the "Prospects and Consequences of the United Brotherhood." In the same way, Dr. Robert Tobias spoke on "The Possibilities and Problems of the Ecumenical Movement," while Dr. James DeForest March of Christianity Today spoke on "The Alternative to the Ecumenical Movement." Fred Thompson from Chicago, Englewood Church, spoke on "Local Atonomy as a Problem of Brotherhood Unity." One of the most helpful addresses was by Dr. Lloyd Taylor on "The Sociological Factors in our Brotherhood Problem." There were two sermons, one by an independent minister, Floyd Strater, "The Glory of the Church," and one by Dr. Tom Parish, a cooperative minister, on "The Nature of Church Membership."

The Planning Committee was made up of the following: James Carr (Manhattan Bible College), chairman, Dyre Campbell, W. L. McEver, Ting Champie, Clifford Hauxwell, Sam Hamilton, Tom Parish, Charles Gresham, Don Evans and Cecil Swindle. The ironic spirit of Ting Champie gave to this consultation a friendly tone and spirit. The meeting was held in the beautiful Broadway Christian Church, in Wichita.

#### By the Way of Bias

A report and appraisal of this consultation was well made by E. E. Bridwell in the April 3, 1960 issue of THE CHRISTIAN EVANGELIST. Mr. Bridwell had the advantage of being outside of the discussions, that is not as a participant, and perhaps can be more objective. I admit that I am somewhat biased and this report will reflect a certain bias. In one of my preliminary statements in the discussion, I began with the acknowledgment that I have a very definite predisposition toward cooperative work which is reflected in all I think and say. Not to admit a bias is to prejudice the discussion. The very title of the discussion indicates this problem. It was referred to as a consultation on internal unity. It would have been much more honest to refer to it as a consultation on the internal disunity and unity among the Disciples of Christ. As a matter of fact, when the program chairman invited me to speak on the program he suggested I ought to begin with the assumption that there is no division among us. This to me is very unrealistic and prejudices any real discussion of the issue and problem. Biases did begin to show up in the initial assignments of topics. Originally I was asked to speak upon "Open Membership," and "The Theology of the United Society." I declined to speak upon these topics since they were obviously loaded and were not conducive to the kind of consultation I understood was to take place. One of the important dicta of

Immanuel Kant was, "To know is to judge." Biases are inevitable.

One of the first evaluations of the conference is that it represents a changed climate in regard to the relationship between cooperatives and independents. A title for this report could be listed as "From Debate to Discussion." It should be noted that this climate is not universal. It is reflected in states like Kansas and Oklahoma. One will not find the same climate in Illinois and Pennsylvania. It means there was a disposition for discussion which in itself is wholesome. As a consultation this meeting was a means of establishing better communication between cooperatives and independents, and for those who are trying to lean on the fence. At least it was a forum where points of view could be presented, challenged and questioned, and discussed. One of the values of this particular Conference was small discussion groups where a real encounter could take place. There was some criticism of the way in which the discussion groups were constituted--having cooperatives and independents choose from numbers so that the discussion groups would be equally representative of both cooperatives and independents. This is the perennial problem of endeavoring to assure equity. The writer was asked to report along with James DeForest Murch on the Wichita Conference to the Indianapolis Ministers' Association. The general feeling of the Indianapolis group and of the two reporters was that the channels of communication should be kept open wherever possible. If this consultation and others can do this they have value, even if the prospects of real unity and cooperation look rather dim.

Having said that, I must go on to say that the kind of communication that needs to take place must have more depth than the one at Wichita had. One hesitates to say this, and yet he feels he should, the discussions were on a rather superficial level. This is sometimes true where rather strikingly different points of view meet for the first time on an equal footing. Each person present was asked to fill out an evaluation sheet in regard to the possibility of another consultation. My own observation was that if we are to meet again we should do so for at least two weeks. We cannot adequately commune with one another until we know one another, understand one another, respect one another, and love one another. We cannot readily trust people we do not know. Also one cannot go into issues sufficiently without the opportunity to clarify what he says and possibly to modify what he says. All of this means that reading papers and answering questions without real dialectic encounter tends to be superficial. It is true that a number of people found this conference to be helpful. The reason why a number feel that very little was accomplished was due to the fact that the issues were not grappled with realistically.

Here are some samples of what was said on the evaluation sheets.

It has been uncomfortable, wonderful, heartaching, and elevating--something like medicine. (Independent)

Excellent! It establishes intelligent, high-level conversation. It shows where we now stand and what we need to do. (Cooperative)

Stimulating, informative, challenging, humbling, affording new hope that we might not yet be ready for divorce proceedings. There were in this conference corrective influences. (Independent)

Valuable, greatly needed, one vitally necessary step that we may at least forstall further 'slipping over into division'. (Cooperative)

Excellent! Best thing that's happened since I entered the ministry 22 years ago. This is our best road to complete unity if we can get some 1,000 top preachers to attend. (Independent)

This is the only 'honest' program among our people I have attended in a long time. (Cooperative)

I believe we have moved toward mutual understanding, if not agreement. Some doors of conversation are opening which were closed. As long as communication is possible, unity is possible. (Independent)

Very worthwhile; splendid spirit. I believe we are closer together because of communication. (Cooperative)

I do believe that some definite prejudicial barriers have at least been lowered, if not broken down. We have accomplished some realization to brotherhood in Christ though not in methodology. (Independent)

The consultation has been of great value in giving free exchange of viewpoint, opportunity of meeting friends who hold different positions and of having fellowship with Christians not normally provided. Out of this comes hope for better relations. (Cooperative)

Valuable as an opportunity for face-to-face, frank discussion of our differences--critical evaluation of policies and trends. Helpful in creating personal friendships across party lines, thus directing attention away from personality-oriented animosities toward issues. Something like this is needed if we are to stop the drift toward division within our ranks. (Independent)



There was only one who said "drop it". Nine were "discouraged"; sixty-five were "hopeful" and "encouraged"; seventeen were "enthused".

### By the Way of Clarity

In order to face issues and discuss them with clarity the terms need to be defined. Because I endeavored to define what I understood a cooperative to be, it was alleged, and this may be true, that I made cooperation a test of fellowship. Personally, I do not believe in any kind of neutrality. I believe one is either cooperative or independent. The endeavor to slide back and forth between independency and cooperation only adds to the problem. One may believe in a general way about cooperation, but as cooperation is used to describe a group of people who believe in cooperative missions, in ecumenical relationships, in supporting the National and World Council of Churches one is talking about a definite point of view and position. These marks are very clear and it may be rather hard for some independents to recognize this but what it means is support of cooperative agencies.

Loaded words were used to identify one group and by contrast, to indicate that if one did not accept this, then he belongs to another camp. Both Dean Walker and James DeForest Murch invoked the infallibility of the Bible and then went on to say and assume that if one does not accept the infallibility of the Bible he does not accept the Bible. Most liberals were charged as having repudiated the Bible. It would be helpful to have a paper or an article on what infallibility means, particularly for those who use it so loosely and freely. I was present for a consultation of this kind between cooperatives and independents in Michigan where this term was freely used. When pressed the independent representatives said they did not mean literalism. What then does infallibility mean?

Open membership was one of the main issues under discussion. As Mr. Bridwell pointed out I was accused of aiding and abetting open membership. Actually what I was doing was advocating the right of any church to practice "open membership". Apparently if one advocates the right of a church to advocate open membership, he becomes an advocate of open membership. At least this was the way my own presentation was interpreted. The United Society is still accused, rather loosely, of practicing open membership. The United Society does not and cannot practice open membership. The United Society cooperates with churches whether they practice open membership or closed membership. This rests upon the assumption that each congregation has the right to determine the nature of its membership. Challenged from the floor on this point, one person persisted in saying, "but how can a church determine its membership when the New Testament makes this clear?" When I consistently affirmed the freedom of the congregation to determine its membership, the freedom of an individual to interpret his Bible, I was publicly called a heretic. This is the danger one faces in an encounter where there

is not sufficient time to understand one another. It is the danger inherent in all communication.

An implicit assumption for independents running through the conference that needs to be looked at was the belief that unity can be based on nebulous feelings and neutrality. The facile assumption was that the separate structural patterns do not represent a separation. Unity is a matter of faith and of heart it is said, but it is much more than that. Unity that is unity expresses itself in genuine fellowship and cooperation. The question is the kind of unity some independents want. For instance, it was made clear that most independents repudiate the International Convention as a business convention, yet they want the advantages of a Year Book and the Commission on the Chaplaincy which are authorized by the International Convention. Many of the independents present were not ready to go as far as Guy Mayfield's letter suggested-- to set up a separate Commission on the Chaplaincy for independent ministers. This would make very clear the obvious division and break that has already taken place. The Christian Standard editorialized against this as "The Point of No Return."

Christian unity implies integrity, responsibility, and a willingness to give and take. A peripheral or parasitic type of unity that hangs on the side and criticizes without taking responsibility is not desirable. One mark of a cooperative minister is that he does not discredit his brotherhood even though he may criticize it. It is difficult to achieve Christian unity by discrediting one another. Christian unity means the acceptance of one another as Christians. To make certain beliefs and practices a test of fellowship is to negate a basic Disciple tradition. Such an attitude leaves little hope for healing the breach between cooperatives and independents. Had these consultations begun some 40 or 50 years ago there might have been more hope. The truth of the matter is there are basic structural differences. Independents have their own conventions, their own missionary organizations, their own camps and conferences, their own pension funds(?), their own publishing house (or at least they think they have), their own colleges and Bible Schools, and now their own organization for establishing new churches, their own ministerial associations and their own listing of their ministers. There are basic differences of belief. These are realities.

Dr. Fiers quoted from a fundamentalist to illustrate the problem: "Your point of view enables you to include me in your fellowship, but my point of view does not enable me to include you in my fellowship." Independents stand for exclusive fellowship--repudiating regional, state, national and international councils and fellowships. Cooperatives believe in inclusive membership. Christian unity grants a common freedom, affirms a common faith, and rejoices in a common fellowship. Unless this impasse can be broken the prospect for real unity between cooperatives and independents is rather slim."

\* A complete report, including the full text of the addresses and discussions, is being prepared by Dr. Charles Gresham. This report costing \$1.25 can be ordered from Dr. Charles Gresham, Box 9632, Oklahoma City 18, Oklahoma. The report on the first conference is \$1.00. For one interested in this issue both are recommended.

## THE FUTURE

Winfred E. Garrison  
University of Houston, Houston, Texas

The editor has asked me to write a short piece about the future of the Disciples as I see it. What their distant future ought to be, of course, is to cease to exist as a separate and recognizably distinct "brotherhood," "communion," "denomination," "sect,"--or whatever one may call it. This is precisely what Barton W. Stone and his colleagues in the Springfield Presbytery were saying when they wrote in the "Last Will and Testament" that they willed "that this body die, be dissolved, and sink into union with the Body of Christ at large." When Professor H. L. Willett wrote, almost sixty years ago in his Our Plea for Union and the Present Crisis (1901), that the goal of the Disciples should be to become "a disappearing brotherhood," there arose a mighty roar of scornful criticism which only gradually trailed off into a lighter vein of ridicule. For several years thereafter, as the older readers may remember, the phrase was good for a laugh in almost any convention speech. Yet Willett was only saying what Stone and the others had said a century earlier. True, they did not say it of the same organized group. But it ought to be obviously true of any separately organized body of Christians pleading for the unity of all Christians that to say in advance that it will never surrender its separateness by merging in a United Church is to frustrate and stultify its own avowed objective.

This is not to say that the Disciples of Christ ought forthwith to go out of business. I said their distant future should be disappearance. There is now no United Church with which we can merge. (The fact that there is an admirable denomination which calls itself that is beside the point.) We still have something to say, and with a far better chance of getting it widely heard than ever before.

Well, what is it that the Disciples of Christ have to say to the world? As advocates of unity, we ought to make known the terms of union that we propose, and we ought so far as possible to make our own practice and procedure consistent with our proposal. Whatever platform we propose as a sufficient common platform for a United Church ought to be a sufficient platform for us as Disciples of Christ. Beyond that, nobody can tell the world "where we stand," for we do not all stand on the same theological ground. There is almost as much theological diversification among the Disciples as there is in the whole of American Protestantism.

This diversification, naturally, has tended to increase as more Disciples have emerged from the state of theological naivete which characterized our leaders in earlier days. We are coming to have some very competent theologians, some of whom contributed to the last issue of the Scroll. It is most fortunate that we now have such men who know the vocabulary of theology and can deal ably with its



concepts. I heartily disagree with some of their ideas, and I also get help from some of their ideas in correcting some of mine. That seems to me a salutary process. It goes on all the better because we are in the same communion and so in easy communicating distance. I think it would be disastrous, however, if, in their anxiety to prevent a "reductionist" or a "least common denominator" type of basis for union, they should use these theological ideas as stones with which to build a wall of separation between Christians. Hasn't that been tried about enough?

It is one thing to say--and I will join heartily in saying--that all Christians ought, within the limits of their ability, to deepen, broaden, enrich and clarify their theological concepts and so to move toward a better understanding of what they really believe. This can lead them toward a more mature religion.

It is a very different thing--and this is the thing that I deny and resist--to say that every communion, including ours, ought to have its own distinctive theological position and to put forth its own doctrinal statement (generally called a "confession of faith" but actually a set of theological affirmations) so that the world may "know where it stands." This not only hinders the development of intelligent theological thinking by individuals within the communion, but also blocks the road toward unity with other communions.

I cannot state my own position more clearly than by quoting with entire approval the following lines from an article entitled "The Nature of Protestant Disunity" by Dr. Charles Clayton Morrison in the issue of The Christian Century for March 9, 1960:

The present writing will affirm three theses: (1) that the nature of our disunity is not found in our theological or ecclesiological differences, but solely in our erecting and maintaining sectarian walls around our particular doctrines; (2) that the doctrinal differences in evangelical Protestantism, so long as they last, can coexist in one church without straining its unity or coercing the conscience of any believer; and (3) that the way to end Protestant sectarianism is for denominations to cease being churches.

The "sin of division," which all the ecumenical leaders are constantly deploring and for which they have repeatedly summoned the Christian world to repentance, does not consist in having a diversity of theological doctrines, for the same people are as constantly saying that these are entirely innocent and often praiseworthy. It does consist in making the statements of these diverse doctrines the banners and slogans of the various "churches" which put them forth and thus inevitably making them walls of separation.

To any Disciple who has got beyond the stage of thinking that we have and have an undisputably inspired and authoritative pattern of thought and practice which can be the only true basis for the unity of Christians, it should be obvious that the best contribution the Disciples of Christ can make to the cause of unity is to stress the truth that the widest possible variety of theological opinions can exist within one church without marring its fellowship or compromising its commitment to Christ as its Lord and Master, and to exhibit that truth so far as possible within our own body.

As to the "future of the Disciples," about which the editor asked me to write, it can follow either one of two lines, but not both. They can follow the line here suggested, sound this note tirelessly in the ecumenical conversations (as some of them have done on many occasions), and point the way toward a unity which embodies both loyalty and liberty; or they can issue a doctrinal "statement of faith" designed to tell the world where we stand (though actually it will only tell where the authors of the document stand and where they think the rest of us ought to stand), join the procession of the other communions that have always thought they had to hedge about the faith with their respective versions of that "large measure of agreement in doctrine" that Visser 't Hooft talks about as the necessary basis of union, and so become just another nice little denomination, still no doubt singing the praises of unity but doing nothing significant to promote it. I hope it will choose the former course.

## THE NEW TIME-CYCLE

Homer W. Carpenter  
Minister Ecumenica, Louisville, Kentucky

Every religious body is under necessity of re-examining its program for the future in the light of the new world scene, a scene which is so fluid, so rapidly changing and so vast in its implications as to be filled with peril as well as prophesy for our time.

Indeed the most significant fact in the contemporary world scene is that the creative forces of our nation and of our world are trying to find their way together. The forces that build, that construct, that redeem, that propagate the great principles of freedom and justice and righteousness and peace. The forces of education and religion and social science, of political economy, of industry, of agriculture and of commerce, trying to find their way together. Creative forces, these, facing an unprecedented international crisis.

In our generation we have fought three great wars, with their unimaginable destruction. In our own country much of our finest man-power and of the most valuable of our material resources have gone into this destructive process. The writer would be the first to recognize the gallantry and the unselfishness with which our nation has fought on the side of freedom. The first to lift, in awe and reverence, the memory of hundreds of thousands of our fellow citizens who gave their lives in defense of us and others. He would be the first to justify the building up, during the last decade, of the vast armaments that make us the most powerful nation in the world. It has all been in defense of freedom. There has been no other choice. It must be apparent that this armament must be maintained, that there must be no letting down of the guard, no appeasement, until guarantees of freedom can be certainly established by Communism.

There are some of us, however, who are convinced that we are already entering a new time-cycle. That the old time cycle of the last decade is finished. That, we have moved over from the old era with the destructive techniques to a new era with its creative techniques, from the old controversial process to the new confessional process, from the old mechanical approach to the new personal approach.

It is just possible that the year 1959 may become the most decisive year in human history, for it was in that year that the new time-cycle had its beginning.

Victor Hugo insists that the most powerful thing in the world is a great idea whose time has come. It was in 1959 that there came this new concept of "waging the peace". For a half

century we had been waging war. We had been hoping for peace, waiting for peace, praying for peace. Came then this shining idea of "waging the peace", of going all out, through creative processes to build a world in which people could live together.

It is this sense of a changing time-cycle that casts a new mood upon the church and that stirs within some of us the conviction that this is Christianity's great hour. It is not surprising that the leaders of the Disciples of Christ eagerly scan the sky-line for the signs of the new time and seek to gear our resources to the enlarging pattern of a new world order.

As we first anticipated our Decade of Decision a number of years ago we fixed one great objective for this period of the 60's. That was the development of new churches. In the Commission on Budgets and Promotional Relations I recall how we made every effort to complete and get out of the way every other kind of drive and campaign for that period. Then suddenly we made the discovery that we were not making any plans to provide for the training of a ministry that would be adequate to lead these new churches. It was there that our colleges and seminaries went into action, launching tremendous campaigns for buildings and staffs and students with which to provide a ministry that could match the new time.

As the Disciples of Christ, who have been known through the years for their ecumenical message and polity, clear decks for action for the Decade of Decision, we discover that there is emerging a new world pattern in which we must find our place as a religious movement and in which we must articulate our efforts with the resources of these other creative forces which I have catalogued above and which reach out into these other areas of life.

The creative forces must find the way. The educational process must provide the technique but it is the redemptive element in religion which alone can inspire this vast undertaking and which alone can transform and redeem the lives of men if they are to be turned from destructive to creative and benevolent ends.

Thus, as we face the fearful possibilities of the vast destruction potential which our modern science has built up, we are back again to this "Battle For The Minds of Men". And that is the business of religion. Those who reason now must be driven to the conclusion of Albert Einstein, father of the atomic age. Just before he died, he thought the only thing that can save civilization now is religion and that it is too late for us to make another mistake.

How then does a religious body find its way into this new world pattern in this new time-cycle?

If civilization is to win there must be

The Development Of The Global Mind.



The mind that can think and plan in terms of a total world. It was in 1900 that Edwin Markham was pleading that our country move out from the provincial to the planetary mind. That was more than a half century ago. In the interim our country has come a long way. The United States has given, in that time, the most dramatic demonstration of international concern ever given by any country on earth. We have not only been the decisive force in three great wars in the defense of freedom, but have piled billions upon billions of dollars as we have gone all out to stabilize the tottering nations caught in the tragic aftermath of war, our enemies as well as our friends. And this we are still doing.

Now comes the call for the global mind that can push back the horizon until it brings into the purview the last man on the skyline of the world. And our country is the only country that has the resources to find and lead the way. Neither England, nor France, nor Belgium, nor Holland, nor Germany, nor Scandinavia, nor Near East nor Far East. Our country alone is young and vibrant and imaginative and adventurous. Our country alone is possessed of the traditions of freedom and the philosophy of life, of the cumulative moral and spiritual and social values to find the way in such a global adventure as this.

It is to the church that the nation must look for the inspiration of the global mind. In spite of the fact that for 1900 years we have been turning to the empire mind of Jesus as He talked of all men, all nations, all the world, it must be confessed that the mass of His followers have been provincial, and local and national in their thinking. In reality the Christian mind, at its best is the global mind. It lifts men above the artificial cleavages of class, and community and continent and culture. It finds its loftiest social altitude in the philosophy of Peter Ainslie of Baltimore in his "My Brother and I", in the foreword of which he wrote "Every man in all the world belongs to me and I belong to him because we bear upon our souls the image of a common Fatherhood."

If civilization is to win there must be the,

Cultivation of the Co-operative Mood.

From the beginning, at the heart of our Christian philosophy there has been a benevolent motive. The Golden Rule has been blazoned upon our banners around the world. But now this primary motive has been powerfully re-enforced by another motive. It is the motive of survival. In the streets of Casablanca during the closing days of the Spanish Civil War an American newspaper correspondent was talking to a little boy. The deafening thunder of the bombs was still in their ears. The correspondent said to the child, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" He whipped back the answer, "I want to be alive." Yes, that's it. You want to be alive and I want to be alive. We want our children and our children's children to be alive. And thus this powerful motive of survival comes into play as we "wage the peace" in this new time-cycle.

That is what Kenneth Latourette, eminent historian meant when he said, "A new world is struggling to be born." That is what Hartley Shawcross, eminent counsellor of Great Britain meant when he said, "Peace is the only alternative to destruction." That is what Marcus Bach meant when he made one of his characters, Joshua Valkner, to say, "There is no place to hide." And that is what Ralph Sockman meant when he pointed at you and me as Christians and said, "You are the custodians of the crisis." Under the development of modern science our destruction potential has become so great that there is only one road left open to civilization and that is the road to peace.

Three great revolutions have taken place in a single decade. In the field of political economy the old empire pattern of our world life has broken up. Within this very year scores of small nations or government units will be cut loose from their empire moorings and set adrift in a sea of confusion. A fluid world is dangerous but prophetic. In the field of communications, whereas a few years ago it took days and weeks to find out what was going on at the ends of the earth, we now sit for an hour in our living rooms before dinner and see the day's happenings of the whole world go by. In the field of transportation one need only to be reminded that he can brunch in Paris at 11 o'clock, take a Boeing 707, shop in the middle afternoon in New York and still get to Los Angeles in time for dinner.

These three revolutions have brought the whole world to our door-step. If we are to live we must learn to live together and in a co-operative mood.

If civilization is to win there must be,

The Acceptance of Personal Responsibility.

The waging of the peace is your job and mine. If it be true that Christianity has the answer, if it be true that the church is the channel of the religion of Jesus of Nazareth into the life of the world, if it be true that you and I, as churchmen, are His witnesses commissioned by Him, then there is no alternative for us except to go all out now with all our faculties of mind and forces of body and material possessions, through the church and through the nation and through every avenue that opens to the end of the earth, to tell the redemptive story of the religion of the Prince of Peace. The man who will not accept this responsibility now will have no right to expect survival in the future for himself and children and his children's children. What a shining hour is this for the church as the other creative forces of our time turn to the waging of the peace in this new and prophetic time-cycle in our world.

NEW BOOKS IN THE DECADE OF DECISION  
or  
THE SHAPE OF BOOKS TO COME

Darrell K. Wolfe  
The Bethany Press, St. Louis, Missouri

At least one thousand new religious books were published in the United States during 1959 and The Bethany Press or Disciples of Christ are credited with publishing twenty-three of them. Some individuals may think that this is too many books but they must realize that religion needs different approaches and different interpretations in order to reach the vast number of people seeking religious help. The demand for religious books has increased greatly in the last five years. Occasionally we hear complaints about individual titles which seem to become best sellers but Christians ought to rejoice that the demand for religious books is growing. Imagine how it would be to live in an environment where no bookstores carry religious titles or, what is worse, where none of their customers requested any!

Through the years religious book publishing has been left pretty much to the discretion and management of some few outstanding religious publishers. I doubt whether Protestant Christianity in general knows the debt it owes to the integrity and to the religious interest of Harper & Brothers in their extensive publishing in this country. Other book publishers should be recognized equally, but none has the outstanding publication record and none has given stability to religious publishing as has this one company. Many publishers have entered the market and have remained for only a short time or have given their publishing program enough strength with which to survive by publishing books in other areas. The first large and significant religious publishing program undertaken by a religious denomination was the forerunner of what is now Abingdon Press. They were American pioneers in a large business venture which has paid off as far as every Protestant minister in America is concerned. Today other denominational publishers, including The Bethany Press, are increasing their output of religious trade books. Each is hoping to get that customer who walks into a bookstore simply looking for a good book on religion. In some respects these denominationally owned publishers are in competition with each other but in other respects they are not in competition at all and I personally prefer to believe that each one enhances the stature of the other, each actually helps the other to find the religious market.

Although religious publishers can point with pride to great sales figures and volume during the past five years, there are still many millions of people in the United States who never read a religious book. Many merchandisers of religious books concede that as far as per capita membership is concerned, Disciples of Christ are comparatively active readers. In fact, one large supplier has fairly conclusive evidence that, per capita, members of the Christian

Churches buy more religious books than those of most other Protestant communions. We all know that in every Christian church throughout America and Canada there are several dozen, if not hundreds, of individual church members who do not read a single religious book year in and year out. The potential market for religious literature is still the widest of any single type of literature.

Recently I made an off-the-cuff survey to estimate how many people among Disciples of Christ purchase and read Bethany Press books. Assuming, broadly, that we have two million members in the United States and Canada, and looking at the publication records of our 23 new religious books published in 1959, I judged that, at the very most, we reached only a total of 20,000 individuals out of the 2,000,000 potential. I went on to assume that perhaps most of our ministers bought at least one Bethany Press publication in 1959. And there I discovered that even if every minister of our brotherhood purchased only one copy of all our religious titles during the year there was still a tremendous possibility for volume sales. I know that we are probably reaching only a small percentage of the total number of ministers but we receive encouraging signs of hope almost every week. The conclusion of my survey leads to an even more definite commitment to publish more religious books and to attempt to reach even more members of our own brotherhood.

It is interesting to note that five years ago more than 60% of all The Bethany Press books were sold to members of our own communion directly through the retail efforts of the Christian Board of Publication. This figure has changed and right now the general public, i.e., bookstores outside of our own organization, is buying just as many of our books as are sold by all of our retail merchandising programs. It is undoubtedly true that many of the trade bookstores purchasing our books are in turn selling them to members of our own churches but the fact remains we publish more books now than we did five years ago and the general public is also accepting a great many more of our titles than they did at one time. Disciples of Christ have a great potential in the publication of more religious books.

The religious book of the future must be placed in the hands of the Christian layman. The demand for religious literature is a great deal more apparent among laymen than it is among ministers. I believe that within the Decade of Decision we will at least have a method whereby every individual member of our churches will be thoroughly informed of and interested in the books published by The Bethany Press.

It is not at all surprising to visit large and active churches in our brotherhood only to discover that not one Bethany Press book is in their church library and to learn that in many instances church librarians do not even know that The Bethany Press is the book publishing division of the brotherhood publishing house. This is not a criticism of any librarians or ministers but it does



point out how the future stacks up in our opportunities. We are making every effort to have members of our churches know that books published by The Bethany Press are published by their own religious brotherhood. When they go to their book supplier or when they order books by mail, they ought to at least be informed of the fact that The Bethany Press is publishing books of particular interest to them.

Religious books of the future will keep the individual layman in mind. There will be fewer books of sermons. It is doubtful if church members are interested in buying sermon books unless they are called upon to lead a service of worship at some time. Preachers have purchased sermon books for new ideas and they will probably continue to do so, but unless Disciples of Christ discover more extremely capable literary pulpiteers, it is doubtful if Bethany Press will continue to publish sermon books. We have devised a program where individual churches can enter into a subsidy program and purchase a thousand or more copies of a book of sermons by their minister. In this way we can take care of the limited demand for sermon books. However, it is my opinion that there will be fewer and fewer books of sermons published, simply because people don't buy them. I wish that there could be strenuous argument against this thesis but our sales figures indicate that the demand for sermon books is almost as low as the demand for books of history.

Some eight or ten years ago there was tremendous interest in books related to the history of our brotherhood. Words were enthusiastically spoken, pointing out the fact that we have a vital and tremendous history and it is true, we Disciples of Christ have a glorious history. As a result of this pressure, it was decided to publish several history books. Probably no book publisher in the world ever had a lower proportion of sales than has The Bethany Press with its Bethany History Series. On the other hand, we are very proud of the fact that we published these eight books. We think they make a vital contribution to every minister's and every church's library. The sale of history books is continuing year by year and we feel that the day will come when every young minister will want to have copies of each book in this series in his own personal library. But if the future of The Bethany Press depended upon publication of history, I am afraid it would be wise for us to go out of business tomorrow.

However, there are more hopeful signals for new books.

It is extremely difficult to locate a new idea for a significant religious book. It sometimes becomes depressing to learn how much of the sameness is preached Sunday after Sunday from pulpits throughout America. Reading sermon and devotional manuscripts from widely separated geographical areas proves that we are still preaching a simple gospel with a common body of information but with very little originality. The religious book author of the future needs to discover new ways to get the Gospel and devotional material into the

language that people enjoy reading. Perhaps all publishers are looking for another J. B. Phillips! How many of these new writers will Disciples of Christ discover in the next ten years?

The successful religious book of the future will require prolonged publicity and promotion. A religious house like ours keeps its books in print for a greater number of years than does a commercial trade publishing house. In the long run figures show fairly conclusively that the total volume of sales is usually just as great in the denominationally owned publishing program as it is in one of the commercial religious trade houses. But in the commercial house the volume becomes great almost at once and if the sale is not immediate the book soon goes out of print. It may be a better gamble for an established author to publish with a large commercial house but for a long publicity and promotion program it is better for him to be published by his own denominational house. It has been our experience that the one way a man quickly fades into oblivion is for him to publish his first book by a religious house that does not have the facilities and the promotional interest that his own brotherhood has. If the author has not been discovered by the public and his work does not at once stand upon its own, his name is almost forever lost to the literary world. On the other hand, if he is a member of the brotherhood of Disciples of Christ and is publishing his first book, he can be assured that the promotional efforts will be extended over a much longer period of time than they would be by another publisher.

It is apparent that The Bethany Press needs to find more new authors, uncover more of the literary talent that is so desperately needed, and thus satisfy the demand of the Christian laymen in the next few years.

The demand for religious books that instruct is greater than it was in the past. In the past the layman requested more devotional or self-help books; now, however, the demand is for more instructional and more program books. Accordingly in cooperation with the new adult curriculum planned by the Christian Board of Publication we have four significant writers working on books which will be closely coordinated and yet which will each stand alone in its area. The over-all subject matter of these four titles is--The Christian Life, The Church and Its Cultures, The Christian Churches and Their Work, and Understanding the Bible. These four books will be written by Gustave Ferré, Richard Pope, Loren Lair and Philip Hyatt. The descriptions have been completed and the authors have signed contracts and are now at work on the manuscripts. Since the development of the subject matter will be handled in a closely co-ordinated manner with the editors of the new adult curriculum, we believe that the books will serve two purposes. One, they will provide more information for the interested adult student. Two, they will each stand alone as subject matter to be perused by individual laymen who want to raise specific questions about the subject of religion as it is taught by Disciples of Christ.

Cooperative development of religious books is demanded by the market more and more as our experience increases. The day is almost gone when one writer sitting in his ivory tower writes one book and sends it to a publisher, then sits back to wait for its publication. Gone is the individual method of manuscript preparation as far the average literary talent of authors is concerned. More and more it becomes apparent that our best books are developed by committees and in cooperation with authors who work together to develop books which will be related or directed to a specific group of individuals. This method was followed in the Layman Series. By correspondence and by reading each other's manuscripts the authors Lloyd Channels and Jack Suggs with the help of two editors and two outside reader-advisors developed the first two books in this series. Each worked with the other. The next two books in the series were developed by much the same process. The sales volume of the whole series has indicated that this cooperative development leads to better manuscript preparation. In the past five years The Bethany Press has published a total of only nine manuscripts which were prepared by authors working by themselves and without consulting with editors during the development of their work. It is a very conclusive experience that an author of a new book ought first to develop his outline or idea then send it to the editor for further development before he actually enters into the preparation of a manuscript. That rare exception is the author of unusual talent and experience who has a creative mind that knows where his market and his reader interest actually lie.

The religious book of the future requires definite interest and promotion directed to the mind of Christian laymen. In order to develop this interest we are publishing more children's books each year. Like the adult curriculum books, the children's books are planned in complete cooperation with the children's editors of the Christian Board of Publication. Mrs. Jessie Carlson always serves as chairman of the editorial committee on our children's books. The first and foremost question raised in the development of these books is "Do these books carry out the ideas presented in our children's curriculum?" Every effort is made to make the children's books a further development of a theme. They are quoted freely in the children's curriculum, and the notes to parents and teachers advise them to buy certain Bethany Press children's books for reading at home and for the shelf of the church library. The most rewarding effect of this method has been the ready acceptance of Bethany Press children's books in public libraries and even in some parochial school children's libraries. A recent experience at the annual meeting of the American Library Association and the Canadian Library Association brought further evidence of the fact that public libraries are actually seeking children's books with religious interest. Our own children's books now are using some of the best-known names in the field of children's literature and illustration.

The religious books that are to come will require that we give continued interest to the development of theological ideas.

Within recent weeks Walter Sikes at the Christian Theological Seminary has agreed to pursue the editorial development of some six or seven books which will deal with specific themes in theology. It is our goal to provide intelligent and understanding means whereby Disciples of Christ will be able to find information and understanding in Bethany Press books. We know that some books will be better than others but the goal will be books the readers can rely upon confidently and use for their own personal development.

In summary it should be pointed out that our book publishing program requires a constant flow of new ideas. In order to be successful the sales and use of the books must increase. A pulpit quotation, brief mention in a local newsletter, or any recommendation by a local pastor does more for the over-all success of the title than the very expensive advertising program.



## THE "CONTINUING EDUCATION" OF THE MINISTRY

Parker Rossman  
Yale Divinity School, New Haven, Connecticut

What are the educational needs of Protestant pastors who have completed their graduate seminary work and are active in the ministry? Like all men today, the minister needs help to understand this rapidly changing world. The pastor needs to understand and be able to interpret contemporary culture, and especially to comprehend the problems posed for the church and the clergy by Science and Technology. Changes keep him almost breathless in this century of revolutions: industrial, political, economic, social, intellectual, and perhaps "spiritual." There are highly significant and rapidly developing changes within the life of the Church itself. The effective minister needs to be conversant with contemporary theology, with developments within the ecumenical movement, with problems being faced by the Church and the missions boards in urban centers, in industrial societies and in countries torn by revolutionary changes. The continuing educational needs of the Protestant pastor are, indeed, almost overwhelming.

At the same time the minister faces such a heavy load of work in administration, program, and community service that it is difficult for him to find adequate time for personal study, reading and reflection, and cultivation of the spiritual life. He needs an occasional change of pace. Indeed, when one notices the driving tension that characterizes so many Protestant ministers today one envies the Catholic priest--who in a similar situation--may sometimes go to a monastery for a period of refreshment and spiritual recovery.

And then there are the individual needs and problems of specific pastors who find themselves poorly prepared in some phase of their work: in preaching, in public worship, in theology. Who can assess the extent to which controversies and church problems are often the result of a failure to give adequate thought to such theological questions as: the nature of the Church, or the relationship between the ministry and the laity? Furthermore, on social issues--such as race--the minister may find himself following instead of leading, buffeted around by the community because of his failure on a significant theological level to think through the foundations of his Biblical faith as the place where he must stand.

It is within the context of needs such as those described above that executives of departments of the ministry of major American denominations are increasingly interested in developing "in-service" programs for the continuing education of the ministry, so that pastors may "restore their study habits" and "be stimulated to wider and more varied reading," and "find a deeper understanding of themselves and their work," plus "a theological basis for criticizing and examining" the bases of their ministry.

### What Educational Experiences Do Pastors Want?

Two different interpretations might be given to questionnaire replies from a selected cross section of Disciples of Christ ministers. From an examination of the programs in which they participate, it would appear that ministers return to summer school or attend "refresher" conferences in order to get "new techniques" and methods to improve their organizational and program work. On the other hand comments upon these questionnaires also show that many hunger to get "out of the rut", for new intellectual and spiritual stimulation. Of 349 pastors who returned the questionnaires, 189 are less than ten years out of seminary. In this younger group:

- (67.7%) 124 are interested in summer or mid-year short courses for credit.
- (67%) 123 are interested in non-credit study conferences.
- (43%) 79 express a preference for free periods for study at conferences that much less structured.
- (41.2%) 76 are interested in guidance through a directed reading program which they might follow at home.

Of 132 pastors who are ten-thirty years out of seminary:

- (57.6%) 75 are interested in credit short courses.
- (60.6%) 79 are interested in non-credit study conferences.
- (42.4%) 54 would prefer a less structured reading period at conferences.
- (31%) 41 are interested in a directed reading program at home.

Much of the interpretation of these questionnaires needs to be made on the basis of comments on the back and in the margins, rather than merely on the statistical replies to specific questions. It would appear, however, that interest in continuing education declines as a pastor gets older. At least the longer a man has been out of seminary the less he is interested in theological study and reading programs. In any case only a minority, mostly men less than ten years out of seminary are interested in serious theological and Biblical study or in reading programs in those fields. A slightly larger group is interested in further study in such areas as "sin, crime, and delinquency" or "science and religion in a space age." The majority are interested in "practical study" in ways of improving church program, better techniques for ministerial work, family life, evangelism, youth work, counseling, "business matters," and church administration.

At the same time, when asked what sort of "continuing education" would be most helpful to them for their parish ministry, a

majority express an interest in unusual experiences which would bring variety, novelty and a break in "drab routine." of 260 questionnaire replies, 157 would like to participate in a "missions Tour", 81 a "European seminar," 85 in a "United Nations Worship", 71 in the Yale School for Alcohol studies. Written in the margins were such comments as

"How about a sabbatical program for pastors?"

"Pastoral exchange with someone in Australia,

Great Britain, etc.?"

"What about world travel opportunities for the young minister?"

".....overseas study....?"

Hand written comments on the back of the questionnaires would suggest that a considerable minority, of younger pastors especially, are extremely dissatisfied with the present programs of state minister's conferences and of the "practical" short courses in seminary summer schools. What this sizeable minority wants is more "concentrated attention upon a few vital problems," especially in the area of theology.

"I would be especially interested in a course on some aspect of theology or Bible study with subject matter sufficiently limited to allow a very scholarly and detailed study of one particular problem or topic."

"If the International Conventions switch to every-other year, how about setting up Pastor's Institutes ...in between. Even with high resolve it is difficult to maintain an adequate reading and study program throughout the week-by-week duties of the local pastor-ate. I almost believe such study courses should be required."

"I believe that it would be helpful if some reasonable quarters were available near a university or seminary center where pastors could browse, study, or write during vacation times."

The dissatisfaction with present programs for Disciples of Christ ministers reflects in part the inability of the pastor to decide what educational experiences ought to claim his limited time, when such a wide variety of programs are available. Or some suggest that they are troubled by their inability to digest, integrate, or profit from the experiences they have. This was stated pointedly by one pastor:

"I've really had it! I've been on a missions tour, a U.N. seminar, to a group dynamics workshop, a spiritual-life conference, to pastors' conferences, workshops, consultations, ecumenical study meetings, and to seminary

summer courses in religious education, counseling, preaching, and urban church. And I can't honestly say I'm a better pastor here for all of it....I can't find time to put things together any more."

When one tallies the large number of programs in which the pastors who filled out these questionnaires have been participating, it is "obvious" that instead of being genuine periods of recovery and refreshment, these programs for "continuing education" are too often more contributing factors to what Joseph Sittler in his 1959 Beecher lectures called the "maceration" of the ministry--chopping the minister to pieces as if he were on a block: his time, his focus, his vision, his mental life. Sittler suggested that the central need of the contemporary minister was to "plan a large self-educative task each year, to "nurture a tough discipline" of study. He further suggested that theological schools ought to do more in behalf of "parish ministers" in order to protect them from the "macerating" effects of promotional and program pressures. But how clean are the skirts of the seminaries themselves?

### Seminary Efforts at Continuing Education

A survey of programs for "continuing education" conducted by major Protestant theological seminaries does not reveal a clear emphasis upon the necessity for a "regular disciplined" and thoroughgoing study related to preparation for preaching--which, of course, is the average pastor's best opportunity to undertake serious study and reflection. Rather the theological schools would appear to be encouraging the "maceration" process by a piece-meal approach to continuing education which clutters the field with a confusing variety of opportunities.

Programs for Credit A significant percentage of American pastors are engaged in postgraduate work for credit. Not all of this work is in theological schools. Community colleges, nearby state universities, even correspondence schools, make it possible for a pastor to "take a few courses along" toward an M.A. in psychology (counseling perhaps), or history (here is a chance to write the history of a congregation for credit), etc.

Many theological schools are making an effort to provide graduate work that is more directly related to the work of the pastor than are the usual M.A. and Ph.D. programs. Colgate Rochester Divinity School, for example, beginning with the year 1953, is "resuming" a program of advanced studies leading to the degrees of Master of Theology and Doctor of Theology "designed to provide opportunity for superior theological graduates to pursue studies related to increasing their proficiency and effectiveness in the pastoral ministries." It is precisely stated that these degrees are not in any way to be regarded as a way of qualifying for teaching in higher education. The Master's degree requires a full academic year of residence which may be spread over a period of not more than three



years. The Doctor of theology degree requires four semesters in residence not extending beyond a period of five years.

Princeton offers a program whereby alumni living nearby can come for Monday work for two years or so if they can meet the qualifications for admission for the Master's degree. However, such advanced degree programs are limited to a few superior students in the first place, and in addition, the requirements are difficult to meet. Therefore, advanced degree programs are not expected to meet the continuing education needs of large numbers of pastors.

Summer Courses A wide variety of summer courses for credit are offered by theological schools. Most of these are "practical," with titles like: Drama in Religious Education, The Use of Role Playing, Pastoral Counseling, Worship and Preaching; Ministering to Men in Business, Youth Work, Urban Church, Religious Writing and Publishing, Evangelism, etc., or they are "special interest courses": The Dead Sea Scrolls, An Introduction to Existentialism, Race Relations, etc. Others are "specialized;" for example, a counseling course at a mental hospital. Some are cooperative. For example, there was in 1953 a three-week institute at Austin, Texas, sponsored for ministers of several Protestant denominations by the Council of Southwestern Theological Schools.

There are also some extension courses for credit offered in nearby cities. Five Southern Baptist seminaries, for example, cooperate with committees that want to develop a Seminary Extension Center in their Associations. Certificates are awarded at the completion of a series of sixteen courses in Pastoral Training or Religious Education.

Correspondence Courses Concordia Seminary (Missouri Synod Lutheran) at St. Louis organized a correspondence school in 1924 which "seeks to contribute to the strength of the Church" by stimulating intensive and systematic Christian thought and reflection. The course planning and work is integrated with resident courses, and courses are offered in Exegetical Theology, Old Testament Introduction, Minor Prophets, History of Israel, New Testament Introduction, The Revelation of St. John, Sermon on the Mount, Parables of the Kingdom, Biblical Theology, Christian Dogmatics, Doctrine of the Atonement, Luther's Theology, Apologetics, Christian Ethics, The Lutheran Particular Creeds of the 1530's, New Testament Word, the Lutheran Reformation, The Lutheran Church in America, Homiletics, Personal Evangelism, The Common Service, Principles of Teaching, Pastoral Theology, The Minister and His Work, Church Architecture. The Concordia library makes it possible to secure essential books.

Auditing Courses Nearby pastors are welcome to audit classes without credit at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Auditing is limited to a maximum of three classes, subject to the approval of the Dean. The auditor's fee is \$5.00 and auditing students are registered after the regular enrollment is completed.

Minister's Weeks A good many theological schools conduct special conferences and lectureships to bring alumni and others back to the campus for a period of refreshment. "Short, but intensive courses" are often given during these days. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary at Louisville in 1951-54 tried moving the spring conference to June so that men could bring their families, but the experiment "never became popular." Sometimes "minister's weeks" are conducted on the field, with a faculty team "going out to a district to meet with pastors for two days of lectures and discussions." (Bethel Seminary, St. Paul)

"There is a proposal before the administration," one seminary reports, "to invite a group of alumni to return to the campus for a week or so to discuss the meaning of their theological education in relation to their period of service in the ministry." This is not intended as a continuing program, but it illustrates many "one shot" efforts to probe into this field.

Union at Richmond invited back the entire membership of the Seminary classes of 1948 and 1953 to a three-day Colloquy to discuss recent developments in theology and for small groups to discuss the curriculum. The participants especially valued the small discussion groups, and asked that they be concerned less with the seminary's curriculum and more related to their work and problems as pastors. Exactly one half of the participants in the Colloquy enrolled in the Seminary's Directed Study program as a result of participation in the Colloquy.

Alumni Publications Alumni magazines and bulletins are increasingly being used, not only for alumni news and promotion, but also for the continuing education of the ministry. For the most part this "content" consists of book reviews and bibliographies or "reading notes on special topics". The Princeton Seminary Bulletin, for example, which is sent free to all alumni three times a year, contains eighty pages of articles, lectures, and book reviews. Princeton also publishes "Theology Today" which seeks to inform its subscribers on contemporary trends in theology and reviews books, as an effort at "continuing education."

Directed Reading and Study An early effort was made to direct reading in connection with a minister's circulating library at Southern Baptist Seminary (Louisville) but the experiment was not successful. No other reporting seminaries have programs of directed reading that they consider to be of any significance, with one exception. Union Theological Seminary (Richmond) has a Directed Study Program as the third part of a well-thought-out program of Continuing Education. Guidance and books are provided "to enable ministers to continue their study in a systematic fashion while engaged in normal pastoral duties." Courses of study are provided, using brief guides prepared by the Faculty of the Seminary and other scholars. Each guide recommends twelve to fifteen books which give a comprehensive treatment of a subject. The recommended books are sent one at a time at regular

intervals. No papers or reports are submitted, and no credit is given. The Seminary makes no charge for the study or book sources and pays postage on books en route to the borrower. Tape recordings of classroom lectures are available in two of the thirty-seven courses offered. Since 1950, more than 800 persons have taken course of study by mail.

A personal letter from the president of the seminary offered the directed study program to 900 ministers in the seminary's vicinity. Of those invited, 187 enrolled.

Loan Libraries A number of theological libraries offer an extension service. (Princeton, Bethel, Iliff, Southwestern Baptist, etc.) Chicago Theological Seminary sends out about three hundred books a month. Book requests are stimulated by reviews published in the CTS Register. Western Theological Seminary library (Reformed Church of America) in 1957 sent packages of books to various regular group meetings of ministers to furnish material for discussions. The loan library at Duke was established to serve not only Duke alumni but ministers all over the world. The McRossie Collection at Drew was "put together just for this purpose." Union Seminary (New York) has approximately 25,000 volumes in a special extension library for Presbyterian pastors in the synod of New York.

Southern Baptist (Louisville) has stopped promoting its minister's circulating library. It was popular during the depression but seems no longer needed "now that men can buy their own books."

A number of other schools lend books to alumni on request but do not encourage the practice with publicity. They are more willing to do so for serious research than for regular reading. A loan library service has been found to be an expensive undertaking. Garrett Biblical Institute found that their success was requiring so much time on the part of the library staff that the regular work of the library suffered.

Individual Study Berkeley Baptist Divinity School is offering its alumni a "study week", in which pastors are invited to live at the seminary and to work as they please in the library. "This provides an opportunity for a pastor to get away from parish duties for a short time to do some serious reading and reflection." In a more limited way, a similar opportunity is provided by the New Haven Disciples House, adjacent to Yale Divinity School.

Princeton reports that many of the bibliographies put out for seminary students are also available for alumni if they wish to have them. "This includes not only the Bible Bibliography and the Systematics Bibliography put out by the Library and a Bibliography of Practical Theology put out by a retired professor, but also current course bibliographies." This is but one of many services rendered directly by the seminary faculty--by correspondence and counsel and conversations as they travel and speak.

Tower Room Scholarship Program The most significant experiment in Continuing Education now being conducted at any theological seminary is probably at Union Theological Seminary (Richmond). Most interesting of the three-part program is the Tower Room Scholarship Program which brings pastors to the campus in groups of four from late September until the end of November and from January until mid-May. Each group arrives on Monday and remains in residence until Friday evening twelve days later.

The group of four pastors meet each day for a scheduled appointment with a faculty member, in this way discussing recent developments in four major areas of the curriculum--biblical, historical, doctrinal and pastoral. The major portion of each day is spent on an independent study project which each pastor pursues in the library tower room. Some weeks in advance of his arrival he submits an outline of the study he expects to pursue while on campus. The four scholars live in adjacent rooms but participate fully in the life of the Seminary community while in residence.

When an invitation was issued to all of the pastors in a Presbytery to participate in this "tower room" program, 70% accepted. Of a selected group of 50 pastors also invited, 81% accepted, revealing an almost astonishing interest in and need for this sort of "refresher" program.

#### A Disciples Program at Yale

When the Disciples Divinity House at New Haven was established, its administrative committee sought to develop its program in two directions. Its primary purpose was to be that of the Disciples House at Chicago and Vanderbilt, an effort to provide for Disciples students at an ecumenical seminary some of the program, fellowship and brotherhood contacts which they would have at a Disciples theological seminary. Beyond this, the New Haven House was assigned a second function by its administration, that of serving as an "Experimental Center for the Continuing Education of the Ministry." At one time there was some discussion of a joint committee of the United Christian Missionary Society and the Board of Higher Education which might stimulate a national program of continuing education conferences. But inasmuch as "continuing education" among Disciples seemed largely to be a function of seminaries, the New Haven "experimental center" has been designed to carry out a few pilot projects which might stimulate interest in and demonstrate the need for new types of continuing education programs for Disciples ministers across the country.

There are advantages in New Haven, of course, which are not easily duplicated elsewhere. Since the Yale Corporation does not allow any official non-credit or refresher programs, and since Yale therefore has no summer school nor summer short courses, the Yale Divinity School faculty is "available" in a sense true of no other seminary faculty in the country. Many ministers, educated and



stationed in the midwest, are especially interested in a period of study "in the east," and a number of Disciples are participating in the Cranbrook Institute at Detroit, which specializes in counseling, and in programs specializing in preaching, parish problems, social and community problems. What then should be the direction of the New Haven Center? Should clues be taken from the Episcopalians which operate the "School of the Prophets" in the west, and the College of Preachers in the east? The latter has during a 20 year period invited more than 3,000 clergymen to seminars which aim to improve preaching by an "always vivid dialectic" which affects spiritual lives and ways of thinking, as well as giving attention to preaching skills.

No, the New Haven committee decided that ministers do not so much need specific skills and program ideas as they need a "change of pace." The contemporary minister complains that he lacks time for reading, study, reflection, cultivation of the spiritual life. Therefore the aim and focus of "refresher courses" should be two-fold: (1) a two-week period of lectures, reading, writing, conversation, which would provide a leisurely opportunity for thinking and study, and (2) the stimulation of and encouragement of participants in the development of a "five year program" of personal study. It is on this basis that the New Haven committee asked for nominations of twelve pastors--six Disciples and six from other communions--for the first experimental conference in January, 1960. Men other than Disciples were nominated by Departments of the Ministry of various denominations; Disciples were largely nominated by state secretaries and state Commissions on the Ministry. Fourteen churches were approached with the request that ministers be released for two weeks, and for the churches to pay the bill (registration, room and board and travel.) Only one church declined, because it was engaged in a building program and doubted the wisdom of the pastor being gone at that time. Some western congregations spent over \$500 on the two week project, and to this point all participants--congregations and pastors--have been enthusiastic. It is too early to judge the extent to which the project is successful in encouraging the development of new long-range study interests, but several of the January, 1960, participants are writing papers and continuing special studies initiated at New Haven.

The program of the conference was as follows: a morning theological lecture (by Niebuhr, Hartt, Welch and others) on the nature of the church, the ministry, the contemporary world situation. These discussions continued for much of the morning, and sometimes extended through lunch. The afternoons, and some mornings, were free for reading. Each evening speakers came from each of the theological disciplines to talk about current books and current developments in their fields. This gave participants two types of opportunities to ask questions in relation to their special interests and study projects. Nearly all of the thirteen participants reported that he returned to his pastorate encouraged, strengthened, nourished, refreshed, intellectually stimulated." While a significant evaluation must wait studies yet to be made, it would appear

that the conference gave a valuable boost to morale, to scholarship, and to spiritual development of participants. The Yale faculty--fourteen of them--who gave leadership to the conference were enthusiastic about the sort of questions which the ministers asked, the range of their interests, and the significance of the work they were able to do during two weeks at New Haven.

At present the future "continuing education" program of the New Haven House is to be limited to three types of programs. (1) An annual January two week conference, similar to the one described above. (2) Summer "reading seminars" to which four ministers will bring their families to live at Disciples House for three weeks or a month. While wives and children go to the beach, the husbands will spend the day reading and writing in the Yale Divinity School library. Wives and husbands will join together in evening "bull sessions." (3) Two, three and four week reading periods, without much direction, for individuals, and for groups of three and four who will have some mealtime and evening conversations together. There are other projects on the "drawing board" which may later be developed, but for the time being the New Haven Center hopes merely to demonstrate the need for less structured and more leisurely and informal sessions for "ministerial refreshment."

Changes are taking place so fast in the "emerging world of science and technology" that ministers need a continuing program of study to enable them to understand the sort of world in which the Church lives and works today and the implications of the gospel for modern culture. The efforts of theological seminaries to "bring ministers up to date" through summer short courses and the like have not yet succeeded in doing the job. Whether in the long range the need is met by periods of quiet in "monasteries" or through conferences planned for "re-tooling, re-forming, and re-oiling the clergy", it would appear to be clear that programs for continuing the education of the Protestant clergy must be more imaginative than in the past, and must in the future have continuity and long range scope across a number of years. Ministers and their congregations have quite a stake in these developments, and Disciple seminaries should be encouraged to take a longer-range look at programs to stimulate and encourage the clergyman after his graduation.

## TWO VERY IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Meetings at the International Convention

The Campbell Institute will have three meetings at the International Convention this year. These will be held in the ballroom of the Hotel Sheraton as post-convention or "mid-night sessions". Each will be in the form of a panel discussion, followed by general discussion. They will deal with problems that are crucial in our brotherhood at this time. The first session will be held Sunday evening, October 23rd, and the topic under discussion will be "Basic Issues in the Cooperative-Independent Controversy". The second, on Monday evening, October 24th, will be "Maintaining a Free but Responsible Ministry". On Tuesday evening, October 25th, the panel will discuss "A Responsible Structure for a Freedom-Loving People".

While the panels are not complete and announcement cannot yet be made as to those who will make them up, it is evident, from those who have already accepted, that some of the best minds in our brotherhood will be brought to bear on these problems. It is obvious to every thinking person that the first topic under discussion is crucial in any consideration of our involvement in ecumenical activities and in our mandate to Christian unity. Too often this issue is clouded by the placing of secondary issues in the foreground to such an extent that the really basic issues cannot be discerned. The panel will try to bring the basic issues into the foreground and to assess whether or not any agreement is possible between these two radically different segments of our people. They will ask whether or not it is possible for them to disagree on such issues and yet maintain the intimate relationships and concerns necessary for our continuing to function as a movement or as that kind of corporate entity which most of Christendom calls a denomination.

The second panel will delve into the dangers and values inherent in our present effort through committees on the ministry to insure that we have a free, yet adequately educated and responsible ministry that can meet the needs of a rapidly changing church in a rapidly changing world. It is our hope to have a minister just beginning his ministry, one in the midst of his ministry, and one who has served for many years in the ministry, together with a seminary professor, discuss how we can achieve this goal.

The third panel will deal with the problem of how we can have a responsible structure in a brotherhood where the sense of freedom is sometimes a virtue and sometimes loses itself in the vice of selfish license. The problem of the delegate convention will be discussed here and the authority of the non-local levels of church activity. Should our "agencies" be merely agents of the local churches or do they have an existence which demands independent decisions on the level on which they operate? How binding, either through moral or institutional pressure, should such decisions be?

On any of these questions one can find violent difference of opinion among the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ). We should have a lively time and hope you will be present to join in the fun.

### The Fiscal Year Begins

This issue of "The Scroll" marks the beginning of a new fiscal year for the Campbell Institute. Put in plain language this means your dues are now due. Last year lack of funds forced us to print only three issues of "The Scroll". We have plenty of interesting material. We hope this year that all four issues may be printed.

Whether or not this is possible depends on whether or not you pay your dues. There are enough members on the roll to finance our publication, in the present limited size, if you send your dues and send them promptly. The treasury will be exhausted with the payment of the printer for this issue. Only you can determine the future of this organ of free discussion among us.

Two dollars is not a large sum in this day of inflation. It is easy to wait to send in your check, but please don't do it. Reach for that pen and checkbook now, and you can have that self-satisfied feeling of complacency when you read future pleas to the delinquent. What else can you buy so pleasureably for two "iron men"? Besides, you'll get four interesting issues to keep you fuming and arguing.



THE SCROLL, the Bulletin of the Campbell Institute, published quarterly in July, October, January, and April.

The Campbell Institute was founded in 1896 as an association for ministers and laymen of the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) for the encouragement of scholarship, personal religious living and publication.

### **OFFICERS 1959-60**

President: George G. Beazley, Jr., Bartlesville, Oklahoma

Vice-President: G. L. Messenger, Stillwater, Oklahoma

Secretary-Treasurer: Paul B. Kennedy, San Gabriel, California

Editor: George G. Beazley, Jr., Bartlesville, Oklahoma

### **PUBLICATION COMMITTEE**

The Officers of the Institute

The dues of the Campbell Institute are \$2.00 per year, including subscriptions to The Scroll.

Correspondence concerning manuscripts and other editorial items should be sent for the present to George G. Beazley, Jr., First Christian Church, P. O. Box 1177, Bartlesville, Oklahoma. Correspondence concerning membership and dues should be sent to Paul B. Kennedy, P. O. Box 148, San Gabriel, California.

# THE SCROLL

The Journal of the Campbell Institute

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BAPTISM AS PARTICIPATION (BELIEVER'S BAPTISM)

Ed W. Hennig



From Our President.....

The Campbell Institute will hold two meetings during the 1961 Assembly of the International Convention in Kansas City. Slated for room 500 in the Municipal Auditorium they will come on Monday and Tuesday evenings following the assembly sessions.

Monday night's topic will be "The Nature of the Church in Disciple Thought and Practice." On Tuesday night the discussion will center in the theme "Emerging Structures in Brotherhood Life."

The panels are not completed but those who will appear one of the nights include Dr. W. E. Garrison, Dr. A. T. De Groot, and Dr. George Earle Owen. From this you can see that you will not want to miss these two Institute meetings in October.

Plan to attend both sessions and share in the discussions as well as help us to look forward to a very active new year in the life of the Institute.

G. L. Messenger, President

#### A Letter from the Ex-President and Ex-Editor

Dear Friends:

There is an old saying to the effect that honest confession is good for the soul. I sometimes doubt if it is good for much else. It enables one to unburden one's conscience and life freely again, but it does not do much about righting the wrongs that have caused that sense of guilt.

I have a burden on my conscience, and I want to get rid of it. I am doing so by writing this letter to all the members of the Campbell Institute, who have undoubtedly concluded that that lately lively body has become a pale corpse on which the maggots of reaction may feed. I don't believe I have killed it. It has survived rougher treatment than I have given it in the last few months and gone on to slay the Goliaths of ignorance, provincialism and reaction. Under its new president, G. L. Messenger, its new Scroll editor, Bill Howland, and its other officers elected in the fall of 1960, it will gather strength and vitality. What I have done is that through the neglect caused by a change in jobs I have set it back a year in its activities. For that I am sorry. It was not done out of malice, for I love that tough old customer and the tough customers that make it up.

Its recent quiescence is not due to the neglect of its present officers. They have written me several times for information, and I have put them off because of the maelstrom of activity and learning into which I was plunged by the acceptance of the position of executive secretary of the Council on Christian Unity. I kept on saying that I was going to get the material sorted out and sent to them but only today have I done it. Now, nine months after they were elected, they can get down to work. They'll need our help by dues, by the writing of articles for the Scroll and by attendance at the sessions at the International



Convention. I intend to give them mine. Maybe I have more reason than most to do so. All of us, however, need to support them, for the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) need the Campbell Institute. Only it can give that freedom of discussion to issues too hot to be handled elsewhere. Only it can provide that literary forum for opinion at the depth level. I'm sending my check for 1961-62 dues, even though there wasn't but one issue of the Scroll during that time. Won't you do so, too? Only thus can you help me live with my guilt.

Your old friend,

George G. Beazley, Jr.

From the Editor's Desk.....

Dear Reader:

George Beazley's "confession" is self-explanatory! I'm sure all of us are delighted enough to have him serving in his present capacity to extend any forgiveness necessary regarding "The Scroll."

In this issue the articles, with the exception of Dr. Osborn's "Why Our Service Book Omits Any Unison Confession of Sin" and Dr. Peters, "The Revelation of God: An Informal Statement", were received and edited by George. The two mentioned above I have added.

A special word of appreciation is extended by yours truly to our Secretary-Treasurer, Robert Chambless. Bob had made it possible for us to have this issue published and mailed before the International Convention in Kansas City. See you there.

Sincerely,

William C. Howland, Jr.

From the Treasurer.....

In those familiar words "If you have already paid this bill please ignore this statement." If you have not paid your Campbell Institute dues for the year of 1960-61 won't you sit down right now and put your check in the mail? Regular publication of The Scroll depends upon our receiving these funds. We are sure that you want this discussion group to continue and its publication to reach your desk. Procrastination is not only the thief of time, but also the death knell of journals, so please give The Scroll the \$3.00 blood transfusion that it badly needs. (We are not unwilling to accept dues for 1961-62.)

Sincerely,

Robert D. Chambless  
Treasurer

## WHY OUR SERVICE BOOK OMITS ANY UNISON CONFESSION OF SIN

G. Edwin Osborn

Professor of Practical Theology  
The Graduate Seminary, Phillips University  
Enid, Oklahoma

THERE IS NO provision for the confession of its sins by a congregation in our Christian Worship: A Service Book. A growing interest in the subject as well as its practice by an increasing number of our churches make timely a consideration of such an omission. Why does our Service Book not include a confession of sin in the suggested order of worship? Perhaps I can clarify the issue.

It has been twenty years since the inception of the book, which was twelve years in preparation. It has now been in use eight years. Twenty years ago the Disciples were not ready for such an innovation. Aside from half a dozen pioneering congregations our churches neither included such a unison prayer in their services nor realized the spiritual need for such. The policy of the editors of the book and its promotor, the Home and State Missions Planning Council, was that two principles should govern the type of services suggested. First, the suggested services should reflect fairly general practice among the Disciples of Christ. Second, even when liturgically desirable, suggested modifications should be conservative, so as not to get so far out in front of our churches they would ignore them. The latter principle is illustrated by two suggestions quite different from our practice at that time. One of these was to suggest restoring the Communion service to the position at the close of the service. This was not only in keeping with the earliest practice of our churches but had the custom of the centuries behind it. The other was a considerable innovation, without much use by our people, that of "An Order for the Presentation and Blessing of Little Children." The only near precedent was a kind of evolution of the older Cradle Roll service in the Sunday School.

IT WAS NO INADVERTANCE that a formal Confession of Sin with a declaration of promised forgiveness to the truly penitent was left out. The first reason for the omission was its general lack of use by the Disciples. But a second and stronger reason actually prevailed: the tradition of the Disciples would not support the practice.

Historically, our fathers in the faith had the background of the Scottish Reformers who deleted from their services all responses of the people except the "Amen" as required in I Corinthians 14:16. One of them (Cartwright, 1574) noted, the minister's is the only mouth ordained of God to speak in public meetings. In John Knox's Order, used in Edinburgh, and the successive orders both in "The Directory" and "Euchologion" and later in the "Common Order" there was a place in the service for a prayer of confession by the minister followed with a petition for pardon. But the minister did this in his capacity as the delegated representative of the congregation. The Campbells, Scott, and Stone were inheritors of this practice. In one of Campbell's references to the public worship of the congregation he mentions "confession of sins" along with praise and prayer and several other "means of the grace of God." (The Christian System, page 186.)

However, it is worth noting the special "doctrinal position" made by "our fathers" on this matter of the confession of sins. They used the plural form "sins," contending that sin was not a general abstraction but concrete and specific with relation to the particular sinner. Moreover, they claimed there were two different ways to deal with these sins: one way for the unconverted; another for the Christian. For the unconverted it was by faith in Christ as personal Savior, repentance of the sins, and faith's obedience in baptism. To those arising from the baptismal waters they spoke Peter's assurance of forgiveness stated at Pentecost (Acts 2:38). For the Christian, instead of the Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Anglican systems of private confession to a priest and his absolution, or public confession of sin and the priest's pronouncement of absolution as a part of worship, our fathers insisted that each Christian was his own priest with direct access to God, and that when he had sinned specifically and stood in conscious need of forgiveness, he should seek God in penitent prayers of personal confession and petition for forgiveness through Jesus Christ, his Advocate, quoting such Scriptures as I John 2:1-2, I John 1:9 and the like.

On this point also our fathers gave one of their distinctive interpretations about the Lord's Supper. They said, among other things the Communion offers regular opportunity for the Christian to "examine himself" conscientiously and seek to partake worthily, with the ordinance's assurance to him of "the forgiveness of sins." (Cf. I Corinthians 11:27-28; Matthew 26:28; one or the other of the "Words of Institution" / Matthew's version, or Paul's<sup>7</sup> was always quoted before the prayers of thanksgiving for "the emblems.") Thus the individual Christian fulfilled his priestly ministry before God, which had been usurped by a professional and magical priesthood.

Moreover, following later Scottish practice than that of Knox, our fathers usually included in (what we now call) the pastoral prayer a petition for forgiveness of those sins of which the worshipers were acutely aware and for which individually they were penitent. Yet in the earlier years of our history the main emphasis on the confession of sins and assurance of pardon was in connection with the observance of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

THESE EARLIER CONSIDERATIONS, however, should not now keep out of our services some collective expression of confession of sins or penitence, and some Scriptural assurance of forgiveness. And these should be followed, I think, by additional praise or gratitude for such grace. This suggested practice can be defended theologically, psychologically, socially, historically, and Scripturally (Cf. Isaiah 6:5-7; Matthew 5:23-24; 6:12). Within our present pattern of public worship confession of sins, assurance of forgiveness, and praise for grace are natural expressions within the "Act of Reverence" of the phases of "humility" and "aspiration." Theologically they are the worshiper's response in contrition and reconciliation to the confrontations of the holiness and redemptive mercy of the God who is both judge and redeemer.

## EMERGING THEOLOGICAL CONCEPTS AMONGST DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

W. B. Blakemore  
Disciples Divinity House  
Chicago, Illinois

During the past twenty-five years, Protestant Christianity has experienced a renaissance of interest in theology in the classical and scholastic sense of the term. For some denominations this renaissance has meant a return to ways of stating the Christian faith which emerged with the origins of those denominations. For Reformation denominations, the emergence of a neo-Reformation theology has been a return to ways of expression with which they were already historically identified, and with which they were identified until the revolt against scholastic theology which culminated about 1800. That revolt was the work of the Enlightenment in philosophy and the emergence of pietism in religion.

The rise of the Disciples of Christ took place at the time of the revolt against classical theology and indeed, was a vigorous part of the revolt. Historically, Disciples of Christ have been against creeds. Alexander Campbell was opposed to all forms of scholastic theology and would not allow it to be taught in the Bethany College which he established. In the realm of Biblical studies Campbell belonged already to the critical rather than to the dogmatic school, and while Campbell did not progress beyond what we today call lower criticism, the fact that he was even a lower critic meant that he was a radical in his day. He laid the groundwork for a socio-historical understanding of the Scriptures, and this kind of approach helped Disciples of Christ to be ready for the fuller critical points of view as they were formulated by the end of the nineteenth century. By that time, the leading scholars in our midst had espoused the higher criticism of the Bible; they were pioneers in the analysis of social and psychological influences upon religious institutions and ideas, and they belonged philosophically to the critical lines associated with such names as John Locke and Emmanuel Kant.

The emergence of a new theological era beginning about 1920 felt to most Disciples like a re-action, especially because this theological revival was intimately associated with the name of Calvin, and most early Disciples had looked upon Calvinism as one of the worst examples of dry and unprofitable theological speculation. The consequence has been that until very recently, Disciples of Christ have not participated in the theological revival of our century. Feeling estranged from the theological tendencies apparent in most religious groups, and even in the ecumenical movement, Disciples have given expression to their ecumenical concern more through administrative and service activities than through engagement in theological discussion. Even so the Disciples of Christ have been outstanding amongst the denominations in the promptness and thoroughness with which they have prepared their responses to such major ecumenical utterances as have come out of the conferences at Amsterdam (1948), Lund (1952) and Evanston (1954).

### The Sociology of Disciple Intellectual Life

Within the decade of the 1950s there has been a remarkable break-through in theological interest and activity of the Disciples. This break-through has, with revolutionary rapidity,



organized the most extensive and intensive intellectual enterprise in which the Disciples have ever been engaged in their one hundred and fifty years. Some orientation to the present organization of Disciple intellectual concern is provided by a brief review of the sociology of Disciple intellectual life.

In the period 1830 to 1860, Disciple intellectual life centered in Bethany, Virginia. Alexander Campbell was not only himself an astute thinker; he could also gather and inspire a team or a "school" of thought. The Millennial Harbinger was not only Campbell's vehicle of communication. It served also his father, Thomas, Robert Richardson, Walter Scott, W. K. Pendleton and others. It nourished a number of lesser lights and even an occasional luminary like Robert Milligan.

With the fading of the Bethany group, the center of creativity amongst the Disciples tended to move toward certain editorships. Isaac Errett through the Christian Standard and J. H. Garrison through the Christian Evangelist exercised a great intellectual stimulation. At the close of the century the creative range broadened again. There appeared a series of scholarly quarterlies, and the more scholarly men of the Brotherhood gathered annually for congresses at which learned papers were read. These congresses served to refresh the preaching ministry in our churches as well as to bring the best minds into relationship with each other.

Shortly after the turn of the century, there developed within American Protestantism an acrimonious division which threatened every denomination. Known usually as the fundamentalist-modernist controversy, the result amongst the Disciples could, at outset of the argument, only be a retreat on the part of the modernists and liberals from public abuse heaped on by certain reactionaries, a retreat into a small and exclusive group which could provide mutual intellectual stimulation. The group of men which so banded together called themselves the Campbell Institute. For a number of years they functioned as a small exclusive group going about their work of rethinking the Christian faith. Eventually, the creativity and sincerity of their thinking won a deserved recognition. The Campbell Institute was opened to any who cared to join and became a public platform for the position usually identified as liberalism. The great creative period of the Institute lasted from about 1910 to 1940. It still exists as an open platform from which anything may be said and on which any questions may be raised. Its current value lies in its role with respect to intellectual freedom rather than as a center of new and constructive ideology. In membership, the Institute is too large to allow the kind of extended and intimate discussion needed for the hammering out of fundamental ideas.

During the 1950s an entirely new social structure for the furtherance of Disciple intellectual life has emerged. It consists in a large number of small discussion groups scattered throughout the Brotherhood and across the nation. These groups have five primary sources.

The earliest of these groups was brought into existence by the World Convention of Churches of Christ at its 1952 Assembly in Melbourne, Australia. A series of theological studies was set up and reported at the Toronto Assembly in 1955. Further studies now being pursued by small groups will be reported at the Edinburgh Assembly in 1960.

The second primary source of study groups is the Council on Christian Unity. The Department of Ecumenical Study of the Council has brought into existence more than a dozen groups each

responsible for a topic which has emerged within World Council or other ecumenical discussions. These groups vary in the intensity of their work according to the urgency of preparation for Disciples to participate in particular discussions. Units exist for the discussion of such topics as Baptism, Rapid Social Change, Proselytism, the World Council Basis of Membership, the Theology of Missions, the Theology of Evangelism, and Biblical Theology, etc.

A third primary source of these groups is the Panel of Scholars, established in 1957 by the Board of Higher Education and the United Christian Missionary Society. The Panel of Scholars numbers fourteen men (professors and ministers) and meet semi-annually to pursue its program of studies. The focus of these studies is to give guidance (not dictation) to the practical life of the churches and particularly to the agencies which created the panel. The work of the Panel is relayed out to a large number of study groups across the nation who then send in their responses. These study groups are also small enough for extensive and intensive discussion.

Another source of study groups is the Department of Social Welfare of the United Christian Missionary Society. It has established three groups which annually conduct "Conversations in Sociology and Social Ethics." The aim of these conversations is not to reach conclusions but to deepen and extend communication, foster new ideas, and discover new insights. The groups are composed of the heads of major agencies of the Brotherhood, seminary personnel, and ministers and laymen known to have an interest in social ethics.

The fifth and newest source of study groups is actually only one group--of about twenty men--known as the Association of Disciples for Theological Discussion. It is composed entirely of men in academic life teaching in theology or a cognate field. It is able to meet because of financial assistance from one of the denomination's major agencies.

The sum total of the intellectual activity now initiated by these groups is the most extensive theological stimulation ever experienced by Disciples of Christ in their history. Even so, one of the limitations of the present sociology of Disciple intelligence is that the groups are all composed of selected personnel. There is not yet a voluntary aspect to these groups. However, it must be pointed out that the only way to get creative thinking done is to bring together those persons known to have the discipline necessary to the pursuit of creative thought. To open the door wide means to allow in those who might come only as auditors, or from some other motivation other than intellectual. That cannot be afforded at this point, for nearly all of these groups are subsidized. Even so if anyone feels left out there is nothing to prevent him from finding some colleagues and starting another group. It is out of closely knit intensive stimulating communication of eager minds with each other that new ideas and insights will emerge.

#### The Significance of "Agency" Initiative

A most striking feature of this new phenomenon of innumerable small study groups, and one which constitutes a sort of revolution which has occurred within a very few years, is that every one of these study units grew either directly out of "agency" initiative, or achieved agency auspices in the process of coming into existence. The World Convention, the United Christian Missionary Society, the Christian Board of Publication, the Council on

Christian Unity, The Board of Higher Education, The Department of Social Welfare--these have been the stimulating units, not the local churches nor even the schools, though the latter provide much personnel for the study groups.

Yet there is something true to the genius of the Disciples in the fact that these agencies have called study groups into being. The motivation of these groups has not been in terms of theology for speculation's sake. It has been in terms of dealing with emergent practical problems, in terms of renewing a sense of direction, and in terms of denominational self-identity as we move from one period of our life into the next. In so far as the denomination is dynamic, it is intended that study groups will assist in maintenance of a sense of communication, and a sensitivity of both the continuities and discontinuities involved in a dynamic movement through time.

With respect to the present study program of the Disciples, the function of the agencies is to present problems. The function of the theological study groups is to identify the issues involved in the problems, and then to suggest to the agencies the various options for action which appear. Ultimate decision lies back with whomever has the responsibility for decision. But in one sense, the arms and feet of the denomination have been building for themselves a more representative brain than they had a few years ago. Instead of a few agency personnel sitting down to think through the issues, many more members of the denomination are now caught up into a practically oriented study of theology. In seeking to provide an orientation for the Association of Disciples for Theological discussion, Dr. Langdon Gilkey, professor of theology at Vanderbilt University and a member of Woodmont Christian Church, Nashville, wrote:

"Believing that theology is most creative when it is the careful thought of the churches, rather than an academic discussion of scholars, and that tradition is alive when it is related to the contemporary scene, we propose to begin with our own church life, and to explore both our tradition and contemporary theology from the standpoint of that life. The real theological problem of authority is not so much an intellectual problem for the academic mind as it is a problem for the life of the church."

#### Theological Self-Examination

It is not unusual then that both the Association of Disciples for Theological Discussion, and the Panel of Scholars should have taken for the first stages of their work a detailed process of self-examination. Fortunately the two groups are in enough communication to prevent duplication of work.

##### a. The Idea of "Tradition"

The first stage of the work of the Panel of Scholars dealt with Disciple tradition. The use of the term "tradition" rather than "history of thought" was self-conscious. The history of the thought of the Disciples of Christ has been amply written by their historians, but the concern of the Panel of Scholars has been to find out what it is that this denomination has been handing down as its teaching from generation to generation, i.e., what is its "tradition" in this sense? In so far as the word

"tradition" is admitted at all, it might be said that it is an emergent theological concept amongst Disciples of Christ because until very recently they have asserted that they are not traditionalists. But the studies of the Panel of Scholars have demonstrated a tradition in the sense that there is a perennial focus to their thought, and that there is a certain Christological character which can be discerned in any generation of Disciple study. This Christological nexus will be explored briefly later in this paper. In one sense, what the Panel of Scholars is trying to do is to get an accurate picture of the past intellectual life of the Disciples. It is not satisfied to accept that history in the terms which Disciples may have formerly applied to it. Instead of repeating the shibboleth that they are not traditionalists, the Panel of Scholars has looked anew at history and is ready to admit what it finds.

#### b. An Honest Description of the Contemporary Situation

Where the Panel of Scholars has begun with history, the Association of Disciples for Theological Discussion has begun with a contemporary situation in the churches. Its aim is to get as true a picture as possible of the Disciples. To get that description the Association has centered on the topic of authority. But it is not asking, "What do Disciples say is authoritative for them." The Association is asking, "What are the authorities which in actuality the Disciples are following." For instance, most Disciples assert that with respect to worship they exercise great freedom and spontaneity. Yet a paper recently read before the Association proves that the order of Worship amongst Disciples is fixed from one end of this nation to the other and across all theological differences. Another study has revealed that within the past few years there have been marked shifts with respect to the topics which Disciples of Christ consider to be a matter of grave ethical concern. These comments on worship and social ethics illustrate points at which the current studies are moving the Disciples beyond their shibboleths and misconceptions of themselves to more accurate self-understanding. Indeed, it is only as a group has an adequate understanding of its present conduct that it is able to bring it under Christian judgment. The Association of Disciples for Theological Discussion is concerned, therefore, to find out what is authoritative for Disciples in Worship, Social Ethics, in ideology, in culture; what authority do Disciples actually accord the Bible, tradition, etc.

#### c. Present Influences on Disciples Thought

While the Associating of Disciples for Theological Discussion looks at the present internal character of its denomination, the second stage of work for the Panel of Scholars deals with present influences from the outside upon the thought of Disciples of Christ. Papers will deal with the present influences of the Bible and Biblical ideas, the influences of modern psychology, of the cleavage between religion and science, of social mobility, of contemporary theological work in general, etc.

#### Beyond Restorationism

The Disciples have needed some of the new understandings which are coming through these studies. When our movement began it included a large element of restorationist thinking. One of the effects of restoration thinking is to obscure the continuities between a movement and its backgrounds and to emphasize the discontinuities. Restorationism says: "Until the restoration took



place, the church ever since the apostolic age was in error. The restoration has replaced error with right and there is no need to study error. Therefore, there is no need to study any backgrounds except the early church." The sense of background and context disappears. Disciple scholarship today suffers badly from the persisting residues of this early Restorationism. As might be expected the concept of Restoration has received an extensive examination in the current theological groups and in every instance the term has been repudiated. It is felt that whatever the validity there has been in the term--for instance a recognition of a "given" element within the church--can be better and more accurately conveyed than by the term "restoration" which inevitably carries forward great inaccuracies.

It is true that as long ago as sixty years, the socio-historical approach to religious institutions enabled some Disciples to accept the idea that their movement emerged out of immediate background and context that influenced the movement and that it was not originally a simple pure restoration. Sixty years ago that general insight enabled W. E. Garrison to discover many of the influences upon Alexander Campbell: the covenant theology, the philosophy of John Locke, the American frontier. But there has not been an adequate exploration of all of the continuities between the backgrounds of the Disciples and the movement as it emerged. For instance there has been a general tendency over the last one hundred and fifty years to feel that between the Calvinism in the Disciples background and their movement there was only discontinuity and revolt. The newest studies are recognizing that however much there was a revolt against Calvinism, there was also a great deal of continuity, and the Disciples will not understand themselves until they appreciate fully the Calvinist quality of their heritage.

#### Emergent Concepts

It is true that most of the work of the study groups so far has been retrospective or at least dealt with the contemporary scene in terms of analysis. They have not yet gone far in a constructive work, but already certain major themes are emergent. Certain theological concepts are moving into the center of attention, and the balance of this paper will deal with these emergent concepts.

One very important emergent area has to do with theological method and the role of theology in the church.

##### a. Theological Method

In the study group so far, there has been a strong tendency to reaffirm a reasonable attitude in theology. This attitude is being reaffirmed, not in ignorance of, but after all has been said that can be said about the limitations of the human mind in the light of depth studies and the enormity of sin. This reasonableness is also asserted only after a recognition of the kind of concern nowadays conveyed by the term "existentialism." However, the Disciples tend to recognize the term "existential" as providing an indication of the level at which religious questions emerge, and "reasonableness" as the method of temper that must prevail in seeking answers. This emphasis on reasonableness is not to be misidentified as a mere persistence of earlier ideas of Reason. The validity of the idea of revelation is fully admitted, but the Disciples reaffirm their traditional position that there are no special or extraordinary instrumentalities made necessary for the apprehension of the meanings of revelation.

The Disciples of Christ have always been somewhat difficult to classify methodologically. On the one hand, they are not rationalistic in any of the several ways in which extreme rationalism has sometimes appeared. For instance, Disciples of Christ are not confessionalistic. That is they do not look upon some particular confession or creed as definitive, or absolute, and therefore the source from which all else can be deduced. Neither do they seize upon some one concept as being the clue to doctrine as a whole. They do not, like the fundamentalists, have a literalistic attitude toward the Bible, approaching it as a statutory or dogmatic document.

But if they are not rationalistic in any of these ways, neither are they pietistic, in any strict technical sense. They do not exalt mysticism nor spiritualism. They use no holy trances and induce no visionary states. They ask no dreams, no prophetic ecstasies, no sudden rendings of the veil of clay, and so much do they not ask these things that they even sing about it. They are not overly given to seasons of prayer and vigils. All of these things are found in their midst, but never at the center of their theological concern. They are neither rigidly rationalistic nor enthusiastically pious. They are reasonable.

Because the Disciples began as a nineteenth-century sect, it is easy for historians to presume that they must have been one of the many pietist sects that appeared at that time. The discerning historians realize that they have more in common with a rationalistic sect like the Unitarians than with the Moravians or Methodism in its enthusiastic forms. But when they try to catalogue the Disciples as a rationalistic sect the Disciples display a kind of warm Christian friendliness and intensity of personal commitment to Jesus Christ which is not quite like the Deists or the Unitarians or dour Calvinist theologians. This Disciple reasonableness is part of their tradition. Generation after generation it asserts itself; resisting revivalism on the one hand and humanism on the other, no matter how much it may have leaned in each of these directions during their periods of pre-eminence, and currently carried away neither by theologism on the one hand or peace-of-mind school on the other.

#### b. Theology in the Church

At the same time that the newer studies reaffirm this reasonableness, they are very impatient with theological imprecision. There is a widespread feeling that we must give theology her due and proper place in the life of the church. Further, there is a feeling that we should not be as afraid of theological formulations as we have been in the past. As a member of the Panel of Scholars wrote recently:

"If thorough, critical theological effort is not given its proper place and function in the life of the church, only two possibilities would seem to remain open: either the church will be hopelessly exposed to the various philosophical and social currents which beat upon it by virtue of her involvement in the modern cultural situation, currents many of which threaten to make shipwreck of the church; or she will vainly attempt to retreat for safety to the corroded anchors of orthodoxy, as many fundamentalists are evidently doing."

This same writer however is aware that the proper place of theology in the church must be defined with full realization of the limits of theology, for the same man wrote these words:

"The limitation in man's vision of the truth inevitably means that our religious ideals are abstractions. They cannot by nature include the total concrete fulness of actual existence nor all the new possibilities emerging out of unique situations. What does this mean for theology? It means that it should never be allowed to become static and final. It means that we must recognize the primacy of our experience of God over our theologies about this experience, vitally important as our theologies are. It means that our religious beliefs and practices should be functionally conceived. It means that we should never give our ultimate religious commitment to any of our religious ideals or theologies, but only to the creative and redemptive working of God, which works at levels vastly deeper than human intelligence and purpose. Hence the urgent need for a willingness of heart and mind to be continually transformed lest we be found blocking the very working of God, as He seeks to bring about the full realization of the beloved community on earth."

While the study groups have not gone far in writing a positive definition of the role of theology in the life of the church some firm lines can already be seen. Interestingly enough, there is one sense in which the Disciple anti-creedal position is crumbling very rapidly. There is still a universal assertion that no creed must ever be used as test of membership. But there is a widespread pleading for symbolic statements of the faith to fulfill two distinct functions. One of these functions is to give Christians some structured sense of their faith, some articulation, even if it is an articulation which must be recognized as limited and relative. There is a strong feeling that granted we can have no absolute statement of the religious truth, spiritual health lies in a firm yet tentative expression rather than none at all. To be forever fearful of giving utterance to conviction is to invite negativism. Expressed faith is likely to be a faith ever seeking better expression. Unexpressed faith is likely to inhibit faith which withers away.

From the standpoint of spiritual health, there is a widely felt need for kinds of statements which begin with the words "I believe.." or their equivalent. Most Disciples also feel that we could use many such utterances rather than just one, and that all of them ought to bear the dates of their origin as a precaution against absolutizing.

The second use of such symbolic utterance would be liturgical. More and more in Disciple services of worship will be found affirmations of faith, litanies of faith, etc. There are known instances of a Disciple service (a young people service) where the Apostle's Creed was used by the entire congregation without apology, let, hindrance or inhibition.

#### c. Bibliological Theology

If Disciples are still vague in many respects regarding the character of the new theology toward which they move, they are firm and exultant at one point in particular, namely, with respect

to the significance of Biblical theology for general theology. Indeed, it is probably the emergence of a new understanding of Biblical theology which has enabled the current theological renaissance finally to come to the Disciples. Disciples could not have a theological renaissance on the basis of neo-Reformation theology, or any form of neo-orthodoxy. Such a renaissance would not be true to our genius. But they could be theologically re-awakened by a renewal of Biblical understanding.

The Disciples of Christ have always been a Biblical people, but their first form of attachment to the Bible was in terms of specifics and patterns. At this point there is a curious contradiction at the origins of the movement, a contradiction to be found in Alexander Campbell himself. On the one hand, he pled for the restoration of the ancient order of things regarding worship and ecclesiastical structure. He had a strong tendency to find a specific "Thus saith the Lord" for every item suggested. Apostolic precedent or Jesus' own utterance were necessary. On the other hand, there were times when he said that, whereas God had dealt with the Jews in terms of specific prescriptions, with the Christians he was able to take an approach more adult in its implications. He provided principles in terms of which the Christian was to work out the appropriate practice for any particular situation. In either instance, Campbell's approach was relatively rationalistic. On the one hand, he was advocating a Biblical literalism with respect to specific acts. On the other hand, he was suggesting the possibility of the Bible as a source of principles from which practice might be rationalistically deduced.

It is a very subtle point, but the newer Biblical theology of our day rejects both the idea of literal Biblical example and of Biblical principle to be treated in a rationalistic manner. Current Biblical theology speaks rather in terms of "Biblical concepts". It searches and finds in the Bible what can best be called guiding or nurturing concepts. When grasped and understood, these do not provide the Christian with precise principles re-applicable in his own day, but they cultivate and enlighten his mind so that as he deals with contemporary problems he does so as a man whose mind is equipped with insights from the Bible and whose spirit has been nurtured by the Bible. Through a mind disciplines in Biblical culture the Holy Spirit enters. The consequence is that amongst Disciples there is the liveliest new interest in the Biblical materials. The newer understandings enable them to escape both literalism and rationalism and return to the Bible with a zest and sparkle and delight as it nourishes their spirits. It is no longer the book of law binding the spirit, but the book of grace feeding the spirit.

#### d. The Centrality of Christ

There is one characteristic which the theological revival amongst the Disciples share with the theological revival as it has appeared in most other denominations. That characteristic is the re-emphasis upon the centrality of Christ.

When the Panel of Scholars began to plan its first round of papers, it found that constantly the members of the group sensed a need to deal with the issue of the role of Christ in the history of Disciple thought. Instinctively they were reaching for what can now be described as the central item in their tradition. At the outset there was a strong feeling that there would be a discovery of something unique in the way in which the Disciples had dealt with faith in Christ, but it was subsequently discovered that what



was supposed to be unique is an attitude in which the Disciples are at one with most of the rest of Christendom.

One of the early studies done for the Panel was on the place of Christ in Disciple preaching. A comparison of different eras of Disciples history demonstrated that preaching the Christ has been a constant in the Disciple tradition. The interpretation or understanding of the Christ may have varied from era to era, but he remained peculiarly the center and chief concern of Disciple preaching. It was similarly recognized that in Disciple worship, centering in communion, Christ remains peculiarly in the center. It was further discovered that of all the slogans which Disciples have used, the one which seems to have the most solidity and at the same time speaks to the largest number of folk is "No Creed but Christ." The very character of this slogan led to a re-examination of what the Disciples' understanding of Christ is relative to theology and creeds. On the one hand, there is the typical Cambellite statement of faith in terms of belief and testimony. This intellectualistic way of defining faith implies an historical figure as the ground of faith. Obviously the study of the relation between the Christ and the Jesus of history was called for. A paper written by Dean Stephen England of Enid, Oklahoma, developed the thesis that the kerygma has to be appropriated in the present day much as it was by the early church--that is by accepting the whole New Testament as if it is the historical ground or the kernel in which the kerygma exists. Historical criticism is valid, not in terms of the attempt to recreate the historical Jesus, but in terms of its discipline upon the Christian imagination as it is stirred by the picture of Jesus given in the New Testament. While it is not the purpose of this paper to argue on this or that side of a theological position as it emerges, but rather to point out the dominant themes emerging in present day discussion, it is nonetheless interesting to remark that in Dean England's emphasis upon the whole New Testament, there is an interesting reaffirmation of of the traditional Disciple approach to that document.

In contrast to the intellectualistic definition of faith given in the paragraph above, current studies have made clear that from the beginning there has been also amongst the Disciples a definition of faith in terms of trust and confidence. In this respect the person of the Christ is of great importance as the object or focus of faith rather than as its ground. A paper by D. E. Stevenson of Lexington, Kentucky, emphasizes that from an early time in Disciple history men were asserting that the distinctive feature of the movement was that instead of centering on a creed, it centered on personal loyalty to the Christ. "No Creed, but Christ" must be understood, it was said, as evidence that the Disciple approach to the Lord is not merely in terms of an intellectual persuasion, but in terms also of heart and soul, and mind and strength. Furthermore, Dr. Stevenson pointed out that this confidential and ever personal way of understanding faith as loyalty to Christ has remained widespread amongst the Disciples of Christ.

In connection with this re-emergence of the idea of faith as loyalty to the Christ three warnings have been voiced within the Panel of Scholars. One of these warnings is that the emphasis on personal loyalty, even though Disciples have often pointed to it as their distinctive feature, is not distinctive. It is very widespread in contemporary Protestantism, and has been for over a century. In some respect it is a common characteristic of Protestantism and probably of Christianity in the end. In

other words, the present study reveals this emphasis, not as a distinguishing feature of the Disciples of Christ, but as a feature held in common with other Protestants and Christians whereby a wider unity may be felt and developed.

The second warning is that it is probably not enough to make only a statement of personal loyalty with respect to Christ. Such a statement does not of itself provide a safeguard against sentimentality and romanticism. There is still need of some kind of relatively structured intellectual expression whereby the sense of loyalty is disciplined by an adequately controlled prehension of the meaning of the Christ. Faith is more than a feeling of confidence; it also implies some idea about the one "In Whom I Have Believed." Once again the inadequacy of slogans was felt, and it was declared that if a slogan is to be retained, it should be always quoted in the full form which the earliest Disciples gave it and not cut in half. The full form of the slogan is, "No creed but Christ; no book but the Bible." In this fuller slogan, the first clause indicates confidence in the person of Christ, the second clause, indicates a Biblical control upon the idea of Christ by which faith is expressed.

The third warning has to do with a tendency found in many denominations but somewhat heightened amongst the Disciples because of their weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper. This tendency is that of making Jesus of Nazareth the object of worship instead of the focus through which faith passes on its way to God. Disciple liturgical practice insures the remembrance of Jesus in every Sunday service. It does not insure that the worshipper see beyond Jesus to the Christ through whom God reveals himself and through whom he reconciles the world into himself. There is a tendency amongst Disciples of Christ to stop with what might be called a Jesusism or a Christian which is something other than Christianity. While it is only a tendency, it can lead Disciples uncritically into a sort of "unitarianism of the Second person of the Trinity."

But when the contemporary studies have sounded these warnings, they still insist that Christology must be the center and pivot of theology. An emphasis that has appeared in a number of papers is particularly vivid in the paper in which Dr. Ralph Wilburn of Lexington, Kentucky, discussed restorationism. He made the point that amongst the Disciples, the ideas of unity and restoration were long bound together. In combination, the idea of restoration provided an idea of what would be a proper unity. With the decay of restorationist thinking amongst the Disciples, there has been already a tendency to disassociate the ideas of unity and restoration. But in one sense, this can result in a sort of unity for unity's sake position. When that occurs the idea of unity very quickly softens into nothing better than a conception of an amorphous fellowship. While the idea of unity needed to be released from residual attachments to restoration, it must be brought strongly into relationship to Christology. When that is done, the tendency to sentimentalize unity will be overcome by the presentation of unity in the light of the nature of Christ. When that occurs, the fatuous preaching of unity in general will be replaced by a structured plea for a Christian unity.

#### e. The Nature of the Church

It is now recognized that in the study program of the Panel of Scholars, the crucial papers will be two, one dealing with the Lordship of Christ over the World, and the other dealing

with the Lordship of Christ over his Church. As these two papers emerge and are worked over by the panel and the study groups across the nation, great new insight into the church will be gained. In many respects the ultimate task of the Panel of Scholars is to get an adequate doctrine of the church. In this respect the practical need of the Disciples for such a doctrine can be pointed out by reference to problems of organization which confront them at present and which threaten to confound them.

#### f. The Problem of Congregational Polity

Historically, Disciples of Christ have asserted that their polity is the congregational form of government. They have stressed the rights of the local congregation, even to making extravagant claims under the slogan of the autonomy of the local congregation. For many years, they even contended that there should be no overhead structure, no denominational framework. The facts of history are that as soon as the Disciple movement began, some forms of overarching structure which incorporated everyone within the movement began to emerge. But this growing and dynamic reality was denied because congregational polity implied that it wasn't there. The Disciples overcame that sort of nonsense some time back. They have also found out many ways of relating the local congregation to wider denominational structures without trespassing on areas of decision which belong to a local church. For instance, when the local churches found themselves constantly subject to financial appeals from agencies, a program of Unified Promotion was established, and an accommodation of local congregation and overhead structure was thus worked out.

At the present point in Disciple history another kind of problem has arisen. It is the problem of the relationships and meanings that should pertain between that part of the general structure which is at the state level, and that part which is at the national level. The issue arises time and again respecting the areas of responsibility to be assigned through the state agencies as over against the national agencies. But with respect to such an issue, classical congregational polity has not one word to say. It lacks any intelligent guidance. There are some Disciples who say, "When a state convention has voted, the church in that state has spoken and rightfully informed the national agencies how they may or may not proceed in that state." It would be just as logical to say that when a national convention has voted the Church in the nation as whole has spoken and that every state should conform to that decision. Obviously, unless the Disciples of Christ can find some more adequate doctrine of the church than the congregational polity they have traditionally held, they will be faced with some power struggles which no one wants.

#### g. A Doctrine of the Church, But with a Difference

Interesting enough, there is one point at which the Disciple genius is asserting itself. In the midst of the clamor for a doctrine of the church, some reasonable voices are saying that what is actually needed is a theology of the denomination. The denomination, they say, and not the church in any absolute sense, is the entity in which we have our ecclesiastical existence. We also seem to be participating in the Church of Christ in the larger sense through federations and councils. Therefore, adequate teachings regarding these entities as well as denominations are needed. Studies are under way which will explore the meanings and implications of congregational polity and reach toward theologies of denominations and councils, seeking to differentiate

that within congregational polity which can be validly retained and identifying what must be augmented if current problems are to be given guidance.

#### h. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

There is one other very general area which obviously will confront the study groups with intense questions. It has to do with communion and baptism.

For some time there has been a growing restlessness amongst the Disciples of Christ with the way in which they are understanding the ordinances. There is a feeling that throughout the denomination, the comprehensions of the meaning of baptism and the Lord's Supper have become thin. Historically, the Disciples have placed emphasis on what is usually referred to as the Zwinglian point of view, that is, communion emblems are to be understood in terms of symbolism which awakens memory. But the ways in which this understanding has been dealt with has become thin and religiously unsatisfactory. As a result there is a reaching out for a more adequate understanding. One direction of this reaching is toward a more sacramental point of view. For some time amongst the Disciples, there has been a verbal utterance of this view point. Finally, in the autumn of 1958, there was a break-through to printed statement calling for a sacramental understanding of baptism and the Lord's Supper. This case was put by Mr. Daniel Joyce, a Disciple minister from Virginia, in two articles in The Christian Evangelist. There can be no doubt that Mr. Joyce, in pointing to the inadequacy of current comprehensions of the Lord's Supper amongst the Disciples touched a tender spot. His suggestion of a more sacramental understanding will have to be taken into account. However, it may be that there can come a significant refreshment at depth of the dominant concepts of the Zwinglian position, particularly the concept of "remembrance". As any of the study groups deal in the future with the Lord's Supper or baptism, their findings will be eagerly examined, for the nature of the "sacraments" is an emergent live issue for Disciples of Christ.

#### i. Further Topics

Under the more general topic of Christ's Lordship, the ecclesiastical significance of denominations and councils, and the relationship of the divine to the ritual and worship of the church, there are numbers of more specific topics which, in the future, the study groups will be discussing. These include" The theology of preaching, the theology of evangelism, a theology of missions, the church's teaching regarding stewardship, religious leadership and the church's ministry, etc. As the study groups examine these areas, other new general concepts may emerge.

#### Summary

At the present time it can be reported that the emergent theological concepts amongst Disciples of Christ are:

Theological method and the role of theology in the church, with special concern for the role of symbolic theology or creeds.

The recovery of the Bible through the discovery of its guiding concepts.



The Centrality of Christ, and the need of understanding the church in relation to him, but also of deriving adequate doctrines regarding denominations and councils, the entities within which we have our ecclesiastical existence.

The problem of the relations which the divine sustains to the actual worship and ritual of the churches.

# THE REVELATION OF GOD: AN INFORMAL STATEMENT

Eugene H. Peters

The Graduate Seminary, Phillips University  
Enid, Oklahoma

In Christian theology divine revelation cannot be understood apart from some doctrine of Christ. Christological matters have always been less than easy; today they are especially perplexing. While classical theories of the person and work of Christ still have proponents, many Christians find it necessary to seek new foundations and formulations in Christology.

This situation is somewhat embarrassing, since the doctrine of Christ belongs to the theological essence of Christianity. I once spoke confidently of solving the problem of "the Christian faith and the modern mind" by radically reinterpreting classical Christian thought. But surely there is some essential theological content to the Christian faith, a content which defines that faith and cannot be replaced or revised without destroying it. This content, whatever else it may be, is Christological in nature. Consequently, unless we who are Christians can explain at least to ourselves why Jesus Christ must have a place of centrality in our theology, we are indeed in serious trouble.

But what is the essential theological content of the Christian faith? If one seeks to answer this by identifying doctrines which all Christians have held, he finds that no single Christology can be so identified. Well, does the minimal confession that Jesus Christ is Lord and God constitute the theological essence of the Christian faith? Perhaps so. Confession, however, must not become credulity. This can be avoided only if honest doubts are permitted. But how can the Christian entertain serious doubts about the object of his commitment--even if they are honest?

Obviously, I am not dealing with a matter of mere academic interest. This problem is my own. In the following pages I intend to state as clearly as possible a Christological position. It is the one which I hold at present. If one asks if it is Christian, I will reply that it is, and I am prepared to defend the point. But if it is not, I suppose I must decline to call my theology Christian.

## I

I begin the constructive section of this paper by calling attention to some general considerations drawn from the theory of therapeutic counseling. First, and simplest, the counselor must be with his client, sometimes for dozens of sessions. Personal confrontation is essential in building mutual rapport and confidence. Second, the counselor must seek to "enter the client's world" in an appreciative, understanding, empathetic way. This requires great patience and sensitivity on the part of the counselor. Third, the client who comes to trust the counselor--perhaps as he trusts no one else in the world--will begin to disclose facts about his life which he had hidden even from himself. Fourth, the counselor must be able to accept the client in all

his misery, guilt, anxiety, etc. Such acceptance does not imply that the counselor will be indifferent to the client and his situation. Indeed, it involves taking the full measure of the client and his situation, yet receiving (loving) him. Fifth, there is always some risk involved for the counselor. To know the client's moods, foibles, dark thoughts; to participate in his insecurity and selfishness--this itself is no pleasant or easy experience for the counselor. In addition, he risks becoming a target for his client's whims, delusions, hatreds, etc.' he may become a scapegoat or object of projection for the client. In such cases therapy occurs only if the counselor is able to accept even these special burdens and obstacles.

This is by no means an exhaustive account of the counseling relationship, but it is sufficient to give us some insight into the nature of man and furnish us an imagery we may employ for theological purposes. Note that one is accepted (loved) only if another participates genuinely in his problem and plight, in all its seriousness. This suggests that God can accept (love) a man only if He "bears his sin." An impassive deity, remote from the human scene, could not accept men no matter how many edicts he issued from on high to that effect.

Christians have characteristically insisted that God is with us, that He himself is a participant in the world. Indeed, could divine love mean anything less than being with the one loved and entering his world tenderly, appreciatively? Hence, Athanasius was defending something fundamental when he insisted, against Arius, that God himself--not a subordinate deity--was incarnate. One is not thereby obliged to accept the metaphysical machinery in terms of which Athanasius made this point nor the doctrinal form it was given in the Nicene Creed. Logically and metaphysically, Arius was perhaps more sound. Nonetheless, the thesis that God himself is with us is surely at the heart of Christian faith.

He who accepts, who loves, risks abuse from the loved one. Indeed, when love is genuine and deep-going, it may find injury inescapable. Religiously, this has been expressed by speaking of the suffering of God. He who is the lover of men becomes the one hated. But the restitution of men--from the religious standpoint--depends on the constancy of divine love in the face of abuse and injury.

Certain present-day theologians conceive the love of God as unmotivated, heedless, indifferent. Their doctrine suggests that God loves the world with all the concern that a spring manifests for those who drink of it. Doubtless, these theologians are concerned to proclaim that man cannot merit God's love; what they actually proclaim is that God is immune to human influence. This clearly contradicts the meaning of love. For, as we know from therapeutic counseling, if one is to accept another, he must be prepared to endure injury from that other.

The doctrine that God bore the sin of man on the cross has had little meaning for modern Christians. Therefore, it has been largely dropped. But the thought that God himself must receive the sinner, bear his burden, experience his sorrow, know his insecurity--if God is to love and thus restore the sinner--is so simple and so basic that one need know scarcely anything about counseling or theology to grasp it. The conception of God as suffering servant is an incisive presentation of this point.

## II

And what has all this to do with Christology? I answer that what I have been expressing about God in general terms is expressed in a concrete, historical way in Jesus of Nazareth. He is the revealer through whom the character of God as suffering love may be decisively grasped. There is no a priori reason why God may not be known as such apart from the revelation in Jesus. Indeed, there are instances in the Old Testament where God is so known. I am inclined to believe that intimations of God which come to us through nature, life, history, etc., are assets (perhaps indispensable ones) to our reception of the distinctive Christian revelation. For if in nature, life, history, etc., one sees no sign of God and His love, he will be unable to recognize in Jesus anything but an exception to his experience, rather than the God who is with us as suffering love. But if one has known the love of God, however vaguely, and then looks intently at Jesus, he will find bursting into consciousness the insight: "God is like that!" The claim that Jesus is the revelation of God is surely vacuous unless Jesus does in fact disclose to us the divine, and such disclosure is factual only if we have known the gracious working of God with us, however indistinctly it may have been manifest.

If someone claims that we know God in nature, life, history, etc., only because we have known Him in Jesus, I reply that Jesus would be an enigma rather than a revelation to one who had no other knowledge of God. An utterly unprecedented fact is utterly void of meaning. For how could one know that it was God who was revealed in Jesus if God were otherwise unknown? Indeed, how in these terms could one recognize Jesus' life as a disclosure at all?

I make no case for the finality of the revelation in Jesus. I doubt that I could. For to me Jesus is the best symbol for expressing who God is and how He deals with men. So interpreted, Jesus is not a metaphysical compound of God and man. Hence, the orthodox basis for the claim to finality is gone.

In the interaction of Jesus with the world in which he lived, the character of man is also revealed: his resistance to love, his craftiness and evasiveness, his sin and anxiety, his longing for redemption, his desperation and indecision, his penitence and unexpected goodness--all this is disclosed along with the persistent, patient working of God for human restitution.

## III

In Christian theology, there has been an uneasy marriage between two concepts of God. God has been conceived as both religiously ultimate and metaphysically ultimate. On the one hand, He has been conceived in terms of suffering, redemptive love; on the other hand, He has been conceived as being-itself, as the source or structure of being. Canon Streeter explains the situation as follows:

The doctrine of the impassibility of God became a postulate of theology. Men still thought of the love of God; they only really meant it when they thought of God the Son.

The Christian Creed acknowledges but one God, and one quality of Godhead--so far Athanasius



won his cause; but the Christian imagination has been driven by the postulate of the impassability of God to worship two. Side by side sit throned in heaven God the Father, omnipotent, unchangeable, impassible, and, on His right hand, God the Son passus, crucifixus, mortuus, resurrectus. What is this but Arianism, routed in the field of intellectual definition, triumphing in the more important sphere of the object of the belief?<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Tennant expresses the same thought: "We are taught to conceive of God as before all things Infinite, Perfect, Immutable, Impassible, Timeless, Omnipotent--these being the essential attributes, and we are left to reconcile with them, how we can--or rather, how we cannot--the conception of a living, loving, energizing spirit."<sup>2</sup>

We may conjecture that the development of the Trinitarian doctrine was partly motivated by the difficulty felt in reconciling these two ultimates--the religious and the metaphysical. To be sure, the Son was not to be regarded as different in substance or eminence from the Father (Athanasius). Nonetheless, the Son was declared to have been incarnate and therefore must have undergone change, suffering, death. Some theologians have sought to escape this conclusion by attributing one set of qualities to Jesus qua human and another to him qua divine (Nestorianism). Yet, most classical theories of the Atonement require (at least implicitly) that the Son change, suffer, die.

If God is the metaphysical ultimate, He is the unconditioned conditioner, the final principle of reality as such. This is the Augustinian position. One who has understood the ontological argument can easily see the meaning of this position. But God--so conceived--is certainly not religiously available. He could not love, could not forgive, could not hear and answer prayer, could not suffer, could not redeem. Yet, such a God would be secure, inviolable, eternal.

On the other hand, if God is suffering, redemptive love, He is subject to the metaphysical structure. To be sure, He might be conceived as an exceptional reality, subject to metaphysical principles in an exceptional way. But can one admit that God is subject to anything in any sense? This is surely scandalous. Still, if one does not admit this scandal, he has little reason for speaking of God's interacting, working, suffering, loving, redeeming, etc.

I choose the latter alternative. This means that I cannot identify God with ultimate reality, but it also means that I can find in Him One who is religiously available. I realize that there are grave problems with this position. However, it has firm rootage in Christian tradition, for one unmistakable Christian affirmation is that God is disclosed in the life of Jesus. I fail to see what this could possibly mean unless it implies that God is known lucidly through this man as suffering, redemptive love.

#### Conclusion

In closing, I ask: do we really see God in Jesus of Nazareth? If we declare that the character of God is disclosed

in him, we are saying that the redemptive working of God is not reserved for a far-away land somewhere beyond but is here in the very stuff of life. Do we experience this as fact? Do we discern the gracious, patient, tender divine activity in and about us? How embarrassing the question is in face of the manifest brokenness of life. Yet, I dare to believe that God is really with us--loving, suffering, redeeming. I make no claim to trace out the action of the divine in our midst. But in more sensitive, appreciative moments, I have been aware that I and my fellows--indeed, the whole world as far as I can perceive it--are in the care of a Mighty One who works redemptively among us, One whose character is revealed in the man of Nazareth.

<sup>1</sup>Streeter, Hibbert Journal, Jan., 1914, quoted in Sydney Cave, The Doctrine of the Person of Christ (London: Duckworth, 1952), pp. 241-242.

<sup>2</sup>Tennant, The Congregational Quarterly, Oct., 1924, quoted in Cave, The Doctrine of the Person of Christ, p. 243.

DEPARTED PULPITEERS AND THE CONTINUING PULPIT,  
An Easter Meditation

G. Edwin Osborn  
Phillips University, Enid, Oklahoma

We Disciples of Christ find ourselves on this Easter Day the poorer in pulpit masters than we were two weeks ago, though richer in heritage, as a result of the untimely death of three of our colorful preachers, William H. ("Bill") Alexander, Warren Grafton, and J. Warren Hastings. This distinguished trio left us for eternity within the space of a week -- Alexander on April 3rd, Grafton on the 7th, and Hastings early on the 11th. I have known Alexander and Hastings pretty intimately for many years; Warren Grafton I knew less well.

In some ways "Bill" Alexander and Warren Hastings were quite similar, though the latter was about fifteen years the senior in age. Both were warm, out-going, friendly. They remembered names as well as faces. They readily put people at ease and could make the person immediately confronted the very center of attention and interest as though no one else, for the time being, existed in their universe. Warren Grafton was cordial but somewhat more reserved. With Grafton you were a gentleman or lady; with Hastings and Alexander a bosom pal. All three were physically robust and attractive men, strongly masculine. All three were distinctive, and impressive if not always great, preachers.

Grafton and Hastings were the more studious, each showing in his sermons sound scholarship. Although Hastings carefully avoided much show of that scholarship, his implications rooted in an ever consistent theology. His deliberate covering over was for the sake of making the every-day man of the street and children think with him. Grafton was a preacher for the professional man and school teacher, for the middle- and upper-income bracket parishioner and students who wanted to be challenged to think. His ideas he often brilliantly, and sometimes unforgettably, stated. Rather than obscuring his scholarship, he transfigured it until at times it scintillated. Yet he spoke with a simplicity of language, clarity of expression, and force of phrase that never left people groping. Alexander read widely, but not over much in theology. He read, and with his nearly perfect photographic memory absorbed literature and letters, poetry, drama, and biography. Not too theologically consistent, he was deeply moving. Each sermon was a kind of compendium of his latest reading aroused to vivid life by his beautiful vocabulary and expressive gestures.

"Flamboyant" is the word that comes to mind to describe both the personality and preaching of "Bill" Alexander -- flamboyant and dramatic. "Debonaire" does that service for Warren Grafton -- debonaire but finely disciplined. I have no single word to characterize Warren Hastings -- he was too complex a person -- a phrase, "virile emotion, skillfully bridled," is an attempt. In his preaching he was pictorial, vividly so, with a homely coloring for background. (But though homely, he was never rustic.) His sermon-pictures came to life, breathing vitality, and strode forth with spiritual urgency. This, I think, rooted in "J. Warren's" powerful emotional nature. Once standing before Moran's painting of the Grand Canyon, he remarked, "God, how that artist must have seethed with inner emotions struggling to get out; I feel that way, and then I have to preach!"

Each of these men belonged to the liberal tradition theologically, and was a worthy contender for his convictions. My personal feeling is that each weakened the spiritual forcefulness of his pulpit when he had to abandon the primacy of preaching to become a promoter of building and financial enterprises: Alexander in erecting his "The Church of Tomorrow," Grafton in that period of putting Country Club Church on a solid financial and organizational basis, and Hastings throughout his entire ministry in Washington, D.C. in his almost super-human effort of bringing National City Church to come of age. When any preacher has to remove from first place the ministry of prayer and the word of God to serve tables (no matter how clamant the need) the quality of his sermons suffers.

All three of these men were of such striking personality and so gifted in ability that they became shining targets for both praise and blame, calling forth either exaggerated admiration or intense criticism. I am convinced of the utter genuineness of all three. The "showmanship" of which Bill Alexander was generally accused was not affected; it was as much a part of his nature as his red hair was of his physical make-up. If he was a showman in the pulpit, it was a native showmanship. Warren Hastings was sometimes criticized as lacking sincerity: for a conjured-up emotionalism in his sermons, and for flattering potential donors to his enterprises. Those who really knew "Jackie" know that such was not the case. "Integrity" and "genuineness" were as inerascably engraved into his character as were his smiling eyes an inseparable feature of his countenance. Similarly, the so-called "sophistication" attributed by some to Warren Grafton is an erroneous judgment, I think. Knowing something of his background -- family, educational, religious -- I prefer to say he was characterized by a worthy pride that sprang from a sense of the inherent dignity of man. He saw a dignity in each individual person making that person worthy of his respect and of receiving the best that his culture could offer.

Out of many such that come to mind these three incidents are revealing. When I came to the pastorage of Enid's University Place Church, early in 1936, that church still had a thriving mid-week "prayer meeting," under the regular leadership of Professor William L. E. Shane of Phillips University. The first Wednesday evening I was present a tall, handsome, red-headed lad who was leading the music with warmth and devotion attracted me favorably to him. Later, Professor Shane called on, among others, "Brother Alexander" to say a few words, and my music leader spoke briefly on the announced topic, closing with an appropriate poem completely memorized and a moving prayer. That was "Bill's" last semester at Phillips, but that Spring he did not miss a Wednesday evening as song-leader and closing speaker, and the extraordinarily good attendance attested to the fact that already "Bill's" great powers as a preacher were operating.

About fifteen years ago I stopped at Country Club Church in Kansas City to confer with Warren Grafton about some Brotherhood interest. Arriving at his office his secretary took me to a far out-of-the-way room, on the second or third floor, where surrounded by a stack of books, a sheaf of papers, and a portable typewriter, and seated on a straight chair before a plain table Dr. Grafton was typing away at a sermon. He explained that his luxuriously furnished office and study, down stairs, was too great an attraction for casual visitors, and that much as he liked people he had a "stewardship of the pulpit to account for," and this sort of secluded place was his only chance. "Besides," said he, "There is no temptation to loll here; this place makes for solid work."



When Warren Hastings came back from studying at Edinburgh University in the Spring of 1929 he approached John A. Tate, then the executive secretary of the Virginia Christian Missionary Society, about getting a church in Virginia. Dr. Tate remarked something to the effect that since Warren was now a graduate of Yale and Edinburgh he might expect the best church in the state. Hastings replied, "No; not the best; I want the hardest assignment in the state. I do not know myself, and I want to see what I can do, and find out whether or not I am fit for the Christian ministry." Dr. Tate took him at his word and sent him to Hopewell where a new church was just getting started in that community into which the Dupont industries had entered to establish a rayon plant; and there Warren Hastings, beginning with practically nothing, laid the foundations for a significant church.

With the drastic loss to our Brotherhood of these three outstanding preachers we are confronted realistically with the necessity of recruiting the most gifted men for our ministry, of giving primacy to preaching, and of infusing our sermons with renewed spiritual vitality. In this situation congregations, conventions, agencies, colleges and seminaries face an essential responsibility and an inescapable challenge for our Decade of Decision.

## BAPTISM AS PARTICIPATION (BELIEVER'S BAPTISM)

Ed W. Hennig  
First Christian Church  
Morgan City-Berwick, Louisiana

### Preface and Confession

"We had better look alive or many younger ministers will not be with us...", said Loren R. Risher in his fine article-- "If Not, Now, When?"-- in the Summer, 1959 issue of "The Scroll." I would like to confess that I have almost been one of these younger ministers who has "thought of not being with you." And I could write a whole article (or two) on where I think the Disciples should more "look alive."

I am sure that my youth and immaturity count for much of such a critical attitude toward our "movement" (?). Someone has recently remarked about that modern day saint, Albert Schweitzer, that even he has somewhat "mellowed with the years." Surely, this was true of A. Campbell, who would spend his earlier "Christian Baptist" days as emotionally heated as a John the Baptist but who would conclude some of his last writings with a very calmly-toned essay on "True Happiness."<sup>1</sup> In other words, it seems that all men tend to see either "black" or "white" in youth and only see a shaded "gray" when older.

But if youth needs a creative outlet to see "prophetic grays" and not "comprising smudges", such prophecy has been found by yours truly in just two well digested issues of "The Scroll." I am looking forward in the coming issues to a grand fellowship of warm-spirited pens. These, I am sure, will let me know that the Disciples are very much "alive" and offer much understanding and freedom to create that permissive atmosphere which allows the darkness of young hair-splitting to become the light of mature gray.

### Baptism as Participation (Believer's Baptism)

One of the key words of Christian thought today is "Participation." Applied to faith, it transforms the old false distinction between faith and works into a vital and quite Pauline understanding of the Christian life. To Paul faith "in Christ" meant much more than an intellectual "yes" to the essential message of the early church--the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. The Christian was to "put on" Christ.<sup>2</sup> Paul taught that the Christian started with the middle term of the essential message--death--and progressed to the third--resurrection--so that he could live in the "newness of life" as Christ.<sup>3</sup> That is, the Christian experiences a radical (not simply mental or emotional) change as he "dies" to his old way of life without Christ and "rises" in a "newness of life" to PARTICIPATE as a Christ-man the rest of his life.

Now, it is more than incidental that we find such strong language from Paul in these passages referring directly to the experience of baptism. If nothing more, this should tell us that baptism to Paul was a radical, earth-shaking experience. It was not just the last step in a process which enabled the members of a pastor's class to sign their names on a church roll book. It was an adult experience for adults who knew what was happening--indeed, who were PARTICIPATING.

This brings up the argument that Paul and most of the exponents of the early church in Acts were first-century Christians. They had not been confronted with the problem of training children or setting an age for baptism--whether at infancy, around twelve years of age, or older. It would seem, however, if we took baptism as participation seriously enough--as Paul and the early church surely did--that it would cause us to re-think our position of "believer's baptism." Even with the psychologists telling us that some younger children are more mature than others who are much older, we still might ask: when does a person really come to grasp the Pauline concept of "dying and rising" with Christ as PARTICIPATION? Probably the age of sixteen would take precedence over the old thought of twelve as the right age of accountability.

We find the Pauline concept of adult participation behind the baptism "by" John the Baptist and thus the baptism "of" Jesus.<sup>4</sup> This baptism was much more than some "initiation rite" and certainly not some "seal" of some mysterious sacrament.<sup>5</sup> Disciples of Christ have been right in holding under suspicion the term--"sacrament"--connected with baptism or any other rite of the early church. For the term does not appear in the New Testament and has only caused some present Protestant theologians to cleverly rationalize a basis for infant baptism. They use the term--"covenant"--and transfer the "covenant idea" of the People of God through infant baptism. Such an experience takes place before the child is conscious of it and has the real value of expressing the prevenient love of God. But there is no excuse to sacrifice adult-baptism-participation in the process.

The baptism by John the Baptist was for "repentance for the forgiveness of sins."<sup>6</sup> And "repentance" meant more to John than "penitence" ("godly sorrow for sin"). Repentance meant complete change of mind, a new direction of will, an altered purpose in life--metanoia--indeed, PARTICIPATION. When Jesus was baptized, was he not entering into a REAL PARTICIPATION of his life to become the Christ of God and Savior of man?

Peter, the spokesman for the early church on Pentecost, made the same point: "Repent, and be baptized..."<sup>7</sup> The problem of non-participation in the act of baptism is clearly seen when the "apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God" but had not received the Holy Spirit.<sup>8</sup> Why? "They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."<sup>9</sup> They had not PARTICIPATED in their baptism, for this only comes when the Holy Spirit (Christ's present activity upon the believer) is "laid upon a person."<sup>10</sup> Then, TRUE PARTICIPATION becomes the believer's humble receiving of God's active Spirit through Christ.

The "laying on of hands" was an additional early church practice in the act of baptism to symbolize this great experience of Christ's Spirit becoming a part of the "risen believer" with Christ. Tertullian placed the "laying on of hands" as the fifth of an elaborate six-step ritual of baptism which included the renunciation of the devil and his works, three-fold baptism, taste of milk and honey as a symbol of the new-born babe in Christ, anointing with oil, and Christian sponsors or god-parents.<sup>11</sup>

This "laying on of hands" might well be included by those today who took seriously the New Testament's teaching of baptism as participation. For such a practice would better teach the content of this participation as the believer's humble receiving of Christ's newness of life just following the believer's resurrection from the baptismal waters. And what would be some other thoughts and practices today by those who seriously took this Pauline and New Testament concept of baptism as participation?

First, it would call for a new emphasis that a real believer's baptism as participation was not only the New Testament practice but is also a needed practice in today's New Testament churches. Second, it might call for the adoption of such a practice as this: (1) infant sprinkling and god-parent sponsorship, (2) twelve year old confirmation, and (3) full membership believer's baptism.<sup>12</sup> This last step of full membership would follow a thorough examination upon completion of a class in churchmanship. A major concern of this churchmanship class would include the encounter of baptism as participation. The infant sprinkling and confirmation would keep the great tradition of the infant-baptists and confirmation churches. Yet, the later, more adult baptism-participation practice would allow the person to have a real "radical" baptism experience involving a fuller "yes" with his whole life--rather than just a weak consent to follow the others in getting "signed up on the church roll."

Third, it would mean two churchmanship or pastor's classes--one before confirmation upon the doctrines of the church and another before baptism particularly dealing with the requirements and responsibilities of church membership. This, of course, would be the real encounter of adult-participation-baptism.

Fourth, it would call for such adult instruction--churchmanship classes to include the re-educating of even the old baptized to see what they had done, so as to more clearly "live out their participation" in Christ. Many, if they had come from infant-baptist traditions, would want to be baptized for the first time--really participating.

Finally, it would cause all of us to see our own baptism in the light of Alexander Campbell's insight toward the New Testament Christians:

We cheerfully agree...that the term Christian was given first to immersed believers and to none else; but we do not think that it was given to them because they were immersed, but because they had put on Christ.<sup>13</sup>

#### An Ecumenical Postscript

If the conclusion to advocate the necessity of "adult-participation-baptism" seems quite "sectarian" and thus "non-ecumenical", let me speak to this point a moment. First, let us agree that it is "sectarian". But let us all remember that the historic church has always had at least two main streams--the more formal and recognized body as the Roman Catholic Church became and the less formal and scorned body as the Anabaptists developed. And could we not conclude from church history that "both bodies" are needed to complement each other? For have they not always from the beginning (Peter and Jerusalem as the "formal" and Paul and Antioch as the "sectarian") formed a creative tension? And does not human nature--though in the "process" of redemption--always need such "tension" to creatively move forward?

The Disciples of Christ have tried to keep both of these elements within its own movement. However, we know that it has been without much success. For there are at least four separate bodies from the parent structure: Church of Christ Number One, Church of Christ Number Two, Church of Christ Number Three (a new one), and the Disciples of Christ. And is it not possible that



the basic reason for this division is that the more "co-operative" body--the Disciples of Christ--have used the wrong "ecumenical principle" in their efforts? If so, what principle would have been more effective and might save future division?

First, let us recognize two main forms of ecumenical co-operation among different denominational church bodies. One is the more associational and less organic as evidenced by the conciliar movements as the World, National, State, and Local Council of Churches. The other is the non-associational and organic unions as the United Church movement like the United Church of South India. Of course, a country's societal structure will determine which direction the co-operation will likely venture. That is, the United States' more associational structure (the many parallel institutions and bureaucracy) would tend to nurture the less organic, conciliar form, whereas the European and Asiatic countries from their more communal society tradition lean toward the state church or more organic union movement.

Second, let us be realistic about the movement of the United States' society and know that we are gradually moving toward a more communal structure. Careless and rugged individualism is being replaced by a more responsible, democratic socialism. Now there are many dangers involved in this movement. The whole society could be seen from the more individualistic or "sectarian" tension involved with the more socialistic or "formal" trend of today's societal movement. And to completely throw out some of the very real values of the more individualistic, frontier society philosophy in which the Disciples were born is to "throw out the baby with the bath." Here, as I am suggesting about United States society, in ecumenical involvement ("participation") both the sectarian and the formal need to be INCLUDED.

Third, this leads us to see what United States churches should investigate as the best ecumenical principle for their churches. And this might be seen in two movements. First, the present expedient principle is the conciliatory step. To see the proper relationship between the state and church, we cannot advance too far ahead of the political transition between individualistic and socialistic democracy. This does not mean that some denominations cannot and should not organically unite when they can do so effectively--as the United Church of Christ. But this is hardly the real scope of an organic movement throughout the United States. Nothing short of full, organic union among all the Protestant co-operative bodies will come to be within a few decades within the United States.<sup>14</sup> And the Disciples--along with the Baptist--have a very valuable "sectarian" tradition to preserve, protect, and to INCLUDE within this more organic venture. And this paper concludes that adult-participation-baptism is one of the very valuable tenets of this "sectarian tradition."

Second, this leads us to see that the future ecumenical principle will be that of INCLUSION. As for baptism, as we have suggested, this would "include" both the infant and adult experiences. Here even the younger church bodies have not measured up to the standard. For they are actually an organic, association union. The individual churches can decide for themselves whether or not they want to require adult or "believer's baptism" (Cf. footnote 12). That is, an infant-baptized person cannot be refused membership within another church. This is hardly true local autonomy and certainly does not follow the principle of inclusion.

Now this brings us to the present controversy within the Disciples today about open and closed membership. In the first place, the controversy is extremely sectarian and hardly a real

ecumenical encounter. For the controversy is over form and not the very legitimate debate concerning infant baptism and believer's baptism. The present "expedient step" is for open membership.<sup>15</sup> But we shall continue to pray and plead for the inclusion of believer's baptism. This ecumenical principle of inclusion which includes adult-participation-baptism would be the real binding factor of the new organically-united Protestant church. Many small details as to what those now in such separate churches would do who had never experienced believer's baptism could be worked out. Probably a similar pattern would be followed as the younger churches which require apostolically-ordained ministers. Those who are now in and have never had the experience will not be required to adopt the new practice. However, all new ones are required to submit to the new order.

Is this ecumenical principle of inclusion as Biblically orientated as adult-participation-baptism itself? Indeed, it is. Was not Jesus indirectly advocating such an insight as He said:

"Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them."<sup>16</sup>

And speaking to the Christians of Jewish origin in Jerusalem who were critical of the Gentiles receiving the Gospel, Peter followed the same God-inspired spirit of inclusion which his Lord had taught:

"As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, 'John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' If then God gave the same gift to them as He gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?"<sup>17</sup>

So following the spirit of the early church and its Lord, could we not say in conclusion that we must strive to INCLUDE in principle and practice ADULT-PARTICIPATION-BAPTISM?

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander Campbell, The Writings of Alexander Campbell (Austin, Texas: Eugene Von Boeckmann, Printer, 1896), including page 616.

<sup>2</sup> Galatians 3:27

<sup>3</sup> Romans 6:3,4

<sup>4</sup> We omit the discussion whether Jesus or His Disciples baptized because the evidence is too sketchy.

<sup>5</sup> As for baptism as "initiation," Disciples would have little debate with the Baptist theologian, Dr. Wheeler Robinson, who claims baptism as the "door of entrance to the church." But traditionally, Disciples would wonder if their prize "process" thought of the steps of salvation (faith, repentance, confession, baptism, and obedience) was at stake. And it would be well for them to so "wonder," for the "entrance" may easily become a "seal" and that could lead to mysterious stagnation, not real participation.

- 6 Mark 1:4
- 7 Acts 2:38
- 8 Acts 8:14
- 9 Acts 8:16
- 10 Acts 8:17, Acts 19:6
- 11 Tertullian, Baptism, 6-8; Corona, 3 as cited in Williston Walker, A History of the Christian Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954), p.96.
- 12 Notice we said "believer's baptism" and not particularly "immersion." The Methodist denomination is truly ecumenical at this point of "form" in allowing sprinkling, pouring, or immersion. They follow the ecumenical principle of inclusion. Cf. p.7.
- 13 Alexander Campbell, Millennial Harbinger, 1837 as cited in W. E. Garrison's and A. T. DeGroot's The Disciples of Christ (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1948), p.227
- 14 Church history leaves us little hope for including the extreme sectarian groups in such a union. Indeed, this would not even be desirable. Both need each other.
- 15 It might be possible for some pastors of closed membership to transform the emphasis from "form" to "believer's baptism" and thus make a legitimate contribution.
- 16 Matthew 5:17
- 17 Acts 11:15-17





THE SCROLL is the Bulletin of the Campbell Institute. The Campbell Institute was founded in 1896 as an association for ministers and laymen of the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) for the encouragement of scholarship, personal religious living, and publication.

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Correspondence concerning manuscripts and other editorial items should be sent to Wm. C. Howland, First Christian Church, 720 N. Sixth Street, Longview, Texas.

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# *The Scroll*

*The Journal of the Campbell Institute*

## ALEXANDER CAMPBELL AND KARL BARTH ON THE DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

Harold L. Sawyer

## ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND THE CHURCH COLLEGE

Phillip B. McKinley

## A MESSAGE OF MEDITATION TO MISSILE-MINDED PEOPLE

or

## A Dialectic Between Liberals and Conservatives

Jack R. Sibley

## From the President

Here is the first of two issues of The Scroll which we've promised for this year. The other will be forthcoming, we hope, at least a month before the International Convention.

Plans are underway for two sessions at Los Angeles, on Tuesday and Wednesday nights, following the regular Assembly session. Program details are not completed, but the discussion on one night at least will center around the problems involved for Disciples in the conversations with the United Church of Christ. You will not want to miss that one for sure!

There has been a real recrudescence of interest in The Campbell Institute this year as shown by the large numbers of up-dated memberships which efficient Bob Chambless has recorded, along with the excellent financial status in which we find ourselves. Thank YOU for helping us to put The Campbell Institute back on its feet and (we hope) continuing its free discussion of matters of paramount interest to Disciples.

Editor Bill Howland will be glad for contributions for future issues so don't let him down. Watch for the next issues—and we'll see you in Los Angeles.

G. L. MESSENGER

411 W. Mathews

Stillwater, Oklahoma



## From the Secretary-Treasurer

If you will check the label on the envelope in which this copy of "The Scroll" is mailed, you will find the latest year for which our records show your dues are paid. Our year begins, by action taken at the meeting in Kansas City, on October 1. This is the last copy of "The Scroll" which you will receive unless current dues are paid or unless you have made arrangements with me (we are extending a very limited number of subscriptions in hardship cases, and are happy to do so when we know such is indicated).

Dues are \$3.00 per year except for seminarians currently enrolled, for whom dues are \$1.00. Dues paid in advance have been received from seventeen people and have been "funded" and set aside in my records. One of these is W. E. Garrison, who expresses faith in both the Institute and his own longevity! May his tribe increase!

May I express my thanks and those of your other officers for your past and future response to our attempts to put the Campbell Institute on a sound financial basis?

ROBERT D. CHAMBLESS

1702 Denley Drive

Dallas 16, Texas

# Alexander Campbell and Karl Barth on the Doctrine of Christian Baptism

HAROLD L. SAWYER  
Hiram College, Hiram, Ohio

- I. On the Essence of Baptism
- II. On the Action or Form and Order of Baptism
- III. On the Power or Potency of Baptism
- IV. On the Design or Intention of Baptism
- V. On the Effects or Consequents of Baptism
- VI. Bibliography

One of the deepest and longest standing divisions in Protestant Christianity is the division between pedobaptist and those who follow what is commonly referred to as "believer's baptism by immersion."

There have been many monologues written on the respective positions, but not many dialogues and not much has been written recently. The following is an attempt at relating the thought of two theologians, one who was a strong spokesman for the "believer's baptism" position and the other a contemporary theologian who was nurtured within the pedobaptist tradition yet who is extremely critical of that position.

Karl Barth provides a perspective which shows both sides of the division to be found wanting and thereby opens the way to a possible reconciliation. This paper is the attempt of one member of the "baptist" community to listen and to learn and perhaps to begin to find the grounds for reconciliation.

## CAMPBELL AND BARTH ON CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

### *I. Barth and Campbell on the Essence of Christian Baptism*

The first question we ask is not a question about the meaning, power, form, or efficacy of Christian baptism, but rather a question about the essence of baptism. What is baptism? What, *essentially* is Christian baptism?

Alexander Campbell in his treatise on *Christian Baptism*, predicates several words and phrases to refer to baptism. He calls it "a symbol," "a pledge," "a seal," "a sign," "a formal assurance," but most often he refers to it as "an institution," or "an ordinance." But none of these terms refer to baptism's *essential* nature for Campbell. Rather, for Campbell, Christian baptism is essentially "an action." Who acts, what is acted upon, the form, design, and consequence of that action make up the contents of his book.

1. The *action* called *baptism*
2. The *subject* of that *action*
3. The *design* of that *action*



4. The *antecedents*; and,
5. *Consequents* of that action<sup>1</sup>

Karl Barth, in his short treatise, *The Teaching of the Church Regarding Baptism* also refers to Christian baptism as "a symbol," "a sign," "a seal," "a pledge," as well as calling it "a type," "a likeness," "a copy," "a sacrament," (which Campbell never does) "a picture," and a "portrayal." For Barth, however, Christian baptism is essentially "a representation."

CHRISTIAN baptism is in essence the representation of a man's renewal through his participation by means of the power of the Holy Spirit in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ . . .<sup>2</sup>

Because of the wide variety of predicates with which both men refer to baptism, several terms being used by both, the difference pointed to here is one of emphasis rather than kind, yet this difference in emphasis colors each of their approaches. Because Barth thinks of baptism as essentially a representation, he is more concerned with what baptism represents than he is with the act itself, though he has some important things to say about the form and order of the act. Conversely, because Campbell thinks of baptism as essentially an action, he is more concerned with the act itself and its conformity to New Testament practice than he is with the reality to which the physical act of baptism points. This is not to say that Campbell was only concerned about the form and order of baptism. It is to say that he was not aware of the symbolic character of language and the "represental" character of ritualized action as these ideas have been developed in our day by the school of symbolic logic.

Once again, to make this point a bit clearer, for Campbell, baptism is baptism, the act performed and nothing more. For Barth, baptism is not baptism, simply the act performed, but rather the whole *milieu* of events and happenings pointed to by the act.

## II. Barth and Campbell on "the Action Called Baptism"

This is, of course, Campbell's way of putting the question. Barth speaks of the form and order of baptism when covering the same ground. Campbell takes some 90 pages to give a scholarly and complete exegesis and exposition of the Greek word *bapto* and its derivative *baptizo* as it appears in the New Testament. In the scope of this paper it is impossible as well as unnecessary to restate that exposition. It is enough to point out the assumption that motivated this great effort, *viz.*, if it could be shown that believer's baptism by immersion was indeed the practice and intention of the New Testament church, then it must therefore and thereby be the form and order demanded of the present church. Here we see the criteria for judging the rightness of the form of baptism was not its meaning or nature, but the historical precedent. We shall

<sup>1</sup>Alexander Campbell, *Christian Baptism: with its Antecedents and Consequents*, Bethany, Va., printed and published by Alexander Campbell, 1851, p.5.

<sup>2</sup>Karl Barth, *The Teaching of the Church Regarding Baptism*, tr. by Earnest A. Payne, London, S.C.M. Press, 1948, p.9.

see that Barth uses the other criteria but reaches the same conclusions as to the proper form and order the act of baptism should take.

Barth agrees with Campbell's position that

the greek word Baptizo . . . originally and properly describes the process by which a man or an object is completely immersed in water and then withdrawn from it again;<sup>1</sup> (but further Barth argues)

(that) it is impossible to understand the meaning of baptism, unless one keeps in mind that it implies a threat of death and a deliverance to life;<sup>2</sup>

(that) generally speaking, the custom followed in baptism is to be called good or bad as it more or less adequately represents such a process;<sup>3</sup>

(and that) baptism carried out by immersion—as it was in the West until well on into the Middle Ages—showed what was represented in a far more expressive fashion than did the affusion which later became customary.”<sup>4</sup>

Yet Barth, supporting his own position by documenting reference to Luther, would not, “regard the original form of baptism as necessary to salvation”<sup>5</sup> and therefore would not make it an article of faith. Barth simply accepts in a sentence or two what Campbell took 90 pages to prove and then goes beyond the literal meaning of the word to the deeper meaning of the occasion, and uses that meaning as the criteria by which he judges the rightness of the form. Since for Barth, the essence of baptism is to be a representation, a picture or a portrayal, the form it acquires is to be judged good or bad in accordance with how well it represents, pictures or portrays that which it is meant to represent, i. e., the individual's participation, by means of the Holy Spirit, in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Immersion does this best. Yet this is not to make the form, immersion, an absolute law or a precondition to salvation.

It is when Barth discusses the matter of “the order of baptism” that contemporary proponents of believer's baptism find most to cheer about and are most eager to proof-text from Barth, often out of context. In discussing the order of baptism, Barth argues against infant-baptism and for “the responsible readiness and willingness of the baptized person.”<sup>6</sup>

The principles underlying the order of baptism are the responsibly undertaken task of the Church on the one side, and on the other the responsible readiness and willingness of the baptized to receive this pledge and to consent to this oath of allegiance.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 34.

The case for a New Testament proof of infant-baptism is more than weak.<sup>1</sup>

From the standpoint of a doctrine of baptism, infant-baptism can hardly be preserved without exegetical and practical artifices and sophisms—the proof to the contrary has yet to be supplied! One wants to preserve it only if one is resolved to do so on grounds which lie outside the biblical passages on baptism and outside the thing itself.<sup>2</sup>

Barth then discusses four arguments for infant baptism which are based on “extraneous grounds” and shows how each are inadequate for the task assigned. Mincing no words, he assails the “prevalent baptismal teaching” as “arbitrary and despotic” arguing that the baptized person must be more than a “passive instrument.”

The baptismal teaching prevalent today in all the great Christian Confessions . . . has in it at this point (the baptism of infants) not a mere chink but a hole. The baptismal practice found in use on the basis of the prevalent teaching is arbitrary and despotic. Neither by exegesis nor from the nature of the case can it be established that the baptized person can be a merely passive instrument. Rather it may be shown, by exegesis and from the nature of the case, that in this action the baptized is an active partner and that at whatever stage of life he may be, plainly no *infans* can be such a person.<sup>3</sup>

All this Barth says to the cheers of “baptist” of all sorts, but this was not his intention. “Nothing is going to be said here in their (Anabaptist of all kinds) favour.” writes Barth.<sup>4</sup> The context that “baptist” who quote Barth usually neglect to acknowledge is a distinction he makes between the “order and practice” of baptism which, for the most part, are matters of human decision, and “the nature, power, and meaning” of baptism which are matters of divine institution and ordination.

Let us set down at the outset all the things that are here to be held fast: the nature, power and meaning of baptism are fundamentally independent of the order and practice which are mutually conditioned by the Church and the person who is baptized . . . Baptism is given into the hands of men and the conditions of its administration and reception are matters of human judgment and decision.<sup>5</sup>

Campbell could neither make nor accept this sort of distinction. For him, baptism was a “positive institution,” and “positive institutions require positive enactments and cannot be established by mere inferential reasoning.”<sup>6</sup> Having made the above distinction, Barth goes further to state that *no* order or practice of baptism can be so out of order as to make a baptism ineffective and thus require re-baptism.

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>6</sup>Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 235

An inadequate order and practice of baptism can obscure its nature, order, power and meaning, can dull and render difficult the understanding of it . . .<sup>1</sup>

But there can be no question of any objective destruction of the nature of baptism, any objective annulment of its power, any objective hindering of its work and therefore of any objective ineffectiveness of baptism because of the inadequate administration and inadequate reception of the sacrament.<sup>2</sup>

There is no kind of inadequacy in baptismal order and practice that cannot be removed or put right by means quite other than that of re-baptism.<sup>3</sup>

It is at this point that Campbell and the traditional Disciple policy of "close membership" might be re-examined. The distinction Barth makes not only opens the way for "open membership" but demands it. It ultimately boils down to a decision. Is church order and practice a matter of "human judgment and decision," or are some of the church practices, "positive institutions (which) require positive enactments (and which) cannot be established by inferential reasoning"? At this point I believe we Disciples should profit from Barth's distinction and see the order, practice and form of baptism as a matter of human decision, while at the same time maintaining our witness to believer's baptism by immersion on the grounds (Barth's grounds) that it best represents the divinely ordained and instituted nature, power, and meaning of baptism.

### *III. Campbell and Barth on the Power or Potency of Baptism*

This is Barth's question though Campbell has some things to say about it. Barth states, "The power or potency of baptism consists in this—that as an element in the Church's message it is a free word and deed of Jesus Christ himself."<sup>4</sup> Here we have a basic and consistent note that runs throughout Barth's theology, i. e., the free word of God in Jesus Christ lives and works within the human words and deeds and actions of the church, not only there, but at least there.

Baptism's potency lies in the fact that it, like all parts of the Church's proclamation, includes within the human act, "indirectly and mediately the free word and act of Jesus Christ, himself."<sup>5</sup>

The church did not herself invent the different parts of her proclamation; nor did she invent baptism. She administers it as instituted by her Lord. She obeys His commands. By word and deed she serves those who are His, in hope and in expectation that through the power of her words and deeds His word and His deed will find expression.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Barth, p. cit., 35.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*



What Barth is seeking to avoid here, is the charge always made against advocates of believer's baptism and sometimes accepted by them, that the power of baptism is in the faith of the believer or in the effect the act of baptism has upon the faith of the believer. Barth thinks Zwingli was wrong in saying that the potency of baptism lies in strengthening the faith of the believer by use of the symbol, and the Roman Catholics are wrong in saying "the correctly administered baptismal rite . . . becomes powerful and effectual by its own mean, *opus operatum*."<sup>1</sup> Rather Barth steadfastly maintains, "the potency of baptism depends upon Christ who is the chief actor in it. It has no independent potency in itself."<sup>2</sup>

Campbell is harder to pin down on this question. At one place he says, "all its (baptism's) virtue and efficacy is in the faith and intelligence of him that receives it."<sup>3</sup> This would seem to assign the focus of power in the faith of the believer. However, at another place he says,

*Salvation is not in the act of believing, but in the object or proposition that is believed. It is the object of faith, and not faith itself, that has the power to save.*<sup>4</sup>

Here he seems to be saying something quite similar to Barth. However he is not, because by "object of faith" he does not mean the free and living word of Jesus Christ himself, but strictly the proposition about Christ, that "Jesus is the Christ, the son of God."

In this proposition, therefore, is the mysterious and sublime *power* of the gospel. It is the distinctive and peculiar object of the Christian's faith . . . . The *power* of saving faith is in the saving truth believed.<sup>5</sup>

The power of faith is in the power of truth. It is not eating that sustains or destroys human life. *It is what is eaten.* Some eat and live—others eat and die. Some believe and are saved—others believe and are damned. Both characters truly and sincerely believe. But the former believe the truth and are saved—the later believe a lie and are damned.<sup>6</sup>

What Campbell seems to be saying is that believing, in itself, can not save one, but believing the right thing can. Adding that the saving power is not in the words themselves, but in the understanding of the words does not really improve his vulnerable position.<sup>7</sup>

The great proposition must be understood before it can be believed in its sanctifying and saving efficacy. But that when so believed it possesses the power, is clearly and strongly affirmed by high authority.<sup>8</sup>

Rather he makes his case worse, because now salvation is made dependent

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<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 20-21

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup>Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 75.

not only upon the individual's belief but also upon a proper *understanding* of what he believes.

The vulnerability of this position is that it places baptism among good works and denies the freedom and graciousness of God's redeeming and saving work. God is able to save only those who believe and believing is a matter finally up to the individual alone. In this case belief, and consequently salvation, become something to boast in and are not received as the gracious gift of God. This, of course, runs against the whole grain of the Christian faith and the good news of the Gospel. If "the mysterious and sublime power of the gospel" is "in this proposition that Jesus is the Christ" and "in the understanding of that proposition" rather than in the "free word and deed of Jesus Christ, himself, indirectly and mediately within the human act," then God's saving power is restricted and limited to the power or ability of man to understand and believe. This errs on two sides then: 1. in restricting the freedom of God's grace, and 2. in allowing man to boast in his belief and his baptism that follows. Baptism is something he *earns* through proper belief and understanding.

But this is only one side, fortunately, of Campbell's thought concerning the "potency" of baptism. There is a two page section buried in the middle of Campbell's book on baptism which is as profound in its depth and contemporary in its insights as anything I have read. In it he disclaims making baptism a "good work," points to the deeper meaning and real potency of baptism, and goes *so* far beyond anything else he says in the book, that it sounds almost as if another person were speaking. In it he has, in fact, foreshadowed the same position that Barth has developed a century later.

We do not place baptism among good works<sup>1</sup>.

In baptism, we are in spirit, as well as in person, buried with the Lord, "wherein also we are raised with him."<sup>2</sup>

This is to say, we are in fact, in reality, in actual being, not just in belief or understanding or symbolically, but ontologically, though spiritually, buried and raised with Jesus Christ. This corresponds with Barth's statement describing the essence of baptism as participation in the death and resurrection of Christ so that "not Jesus Christ alone, but with him also this particular individual died eternally . . . and rose from the dead for evermore."<sup>3</sup> Because this is the nature of the event, it is not something we can do for ourselves.

Dead men neither bury themselves nor raise themselves to life again.  
IN BAPTISM, WE ARE PASSIVE IN EVERY THING BUT IN  
GIVING OUR CONSENT. WE ARE BURIED AND WE ARE  
RAISED BY ANOTHER. HENCE IN NO VIEW OF BAPTISM  
CAN IT BE CALLED A GOOD WORK.<sup>4</sup>

Then Campbell proceeds to make a distinction between a procuring and

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<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 255.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 256.

<sup>3</sup>Barth, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup>Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 256.

a concurring or instrumental cause saying that baptism has only an instrumental causality.

The influence which baptism may have upon our spiritual relation is, therefore, NOT BECAUSE OF ANY MERIT IN THE ACT AS OUR OWN: not as a procuring cause, but merely as an instrumental and concurring cause, by which we "put on Christ," and are united to him *formally* as well as in heart, entering into covenant with him, and uniting ourselves to him in his death, burial, and resurrection.<sup>1</sup>

The procuring cause is, presumedly, God's act in Christ thus holding on to the central and essential Christian affirmation that we are saved by God's action and not our own. Baptism, then, is the instrumental cause which *formally* links us to that saving act in Christ and assures our hearts that we are "in Christ." This is the point Barth is making, I think, when he draws the distinction between "*causa*" and "*cognitio salutis*."

In baptism we have to do not with the *causa* but with the *cognitio salutis* . . . We must not confound *causa* with *cognitio*. . . . The word and work of Jesus Christ . . . alone is the generative cause of salvation, (yet) it desires to be seen, heard, perceived, savoured, understood, considered, and obeyed by the man who is saved and believes in his salvation.<sup>2</sup>

(In baptism the reality of salvation) becomes truth for us.<sup>3</sup>

Sealing *-obsignare-* that is the special work of baptism. . . . If it be understood *thus*, one ought to say of it in the words of Scripture: it saves, sanctifies, purifies, mediates and gives the forgiveness of sins and the grace of the Holy Spirit, it effects the new birth, it is the admission of man into the covenant of Grace and into the Church.<sup>4</sup>

The "if" is of crucial importance here. Baptism may be understood as "effecting" all of these things only IF it is recognized that baptism is "effectual" in bringing these things home to the individual in a "formal" way, to use Campbell's term, and does not itself "procure" salvation. It is the "*cognitio salutis*" and not the *causa*."

Finally, Campbell sees the deeper significance of baptism as being the embodiment of the whole gospel in a single act.

It (baptism) is a sort of embodiment of the gospel; and a solemn expression of it all in a single act. It is a monumental and commemorative institution, bodying forth to all ages the great facts of man's redemption as developed and consummated, in the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>5</sup>

This has in all past time, and will in all future time impart to this

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<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup>Barth, op. cit., pp. 27-28.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup>Campbell, op. cit., p. 257.

institution a solemnity, a significance, and an importance which no art or ingenuity of corrupted Christianity can long obscure or successfully deface.<sup>1</sup>

In this statement, Campbell goes quite beyond his predominant concern in the act or form of baptism itself to reach an insight about the reality beyond the act and to which the act points. This is no doubt in the back of Campbell's mind all the time and it is too bad that it does not more often reach explicit statement. It is a shame Campbell could not have seen and used this insight that baptism "bodies forth to all ages the great facts of man's redemption AS DEVELOPED AND CONSUMMATED IN THE DEATH, BURIAL, AND RESURRECTION OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST," could not have used this insight as the basis for a sound argument unholding believer's baptism by immersion (as Barth does) instead of merely stating the insight, incidentally, and basing his argument primarily on the meaning of the word *bapto*. It is precisely because Barth recognizes the "bodying forth" i. e., representative, nature of baptism that he insists upon the form and order that he does. Campbell's only mistake was to treat in an incidental way that which is essential in the doctrine of baptism, i. e., recognizing the representative nature of baptism, that it embodies the whole gospel in a single act and thereby in being enacted it embodies the individual in the whole gospel.

#### *IV. Campbell and Barth on Design and Purpose or Meaning and Intention of Baptism*

Campbell discusses the design and purpose of baptism while Barth discusses the meaning and intention, but they are both asking the same question, What is baptism for?

Campbell says quite pointedly that baptism is for the remission of sins and for no other specific purpose.

We are not commanded to be baptized for faith, for repentance, for justification, for regeneration, for sanctification, for adoption, for the Holy Spirit, for eternal life. WE ARE COMMANDED TO BE BAPTIZED "FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS" not for the remission of "original sin"—not for the remission of sins yet to be committed, or in advance; but for the remission of sins that are past, that have been committed "through the forbearance of God."<sup>2</sup>

The fixtures of language could not more safely secure the intention of an institution. It was not *because* your sins *have been* remitted; but it is *for*, or *in order to* the remission of sins.<sup>3</sup>

It is probably from such statements as these and from a position such as this that Disciples are charged with "water regeneration." Perhaps the charge is not altogether unjustified, but Campbell does attempt to avoid the charge by making a distinction between the "real" and the "formal" remission of sins.

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<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 253.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 250.



The blood of Christ *really* cleanses us who believe from all sin. . . . The water of baptism *formally* washes away our sin. Paul's sins were *really* pardoned when he believed, yet he had . . . no *formal* acquittal until he had washed them away in the waters of baptism.<sup>1</sup>

This harks back to the distinction made earlier that "the influence which baptism may have upon our spiritual relation is . . . not a procuring cause, but merely an instrumental or concurring cause by which we "put on Christ," and are united to him formally."<sup>2</sup> The question Campbell would have to answer (and I know of no place where he does specifically answer it) is, Would a person "really" be cleansed of his sins if he were not "formally" cleansed i. e., baptized? Or again, would the "procuring cause" be effectual if the "concurring" act (baptism) were not practiced? I suspect if pushed to the corner Campbell would have answered "no" and if no then it becomes very difficult to avoid the charge of "water regeneration." Most simply expressed, Campbell does say that baptism is for the remission of sins.

Barth points to two meanings or intentions of baptism, the meaning it has for the church and the glory of God and the meaning it has for the individual being baptized. The first meaning or intention or purpose of baptism mentioned by Barth is one usually overlooked in our baptismal practice. That baptism is *for* "the glorification of God in the building up of the church of Jesus Christ,"<sup>3</sup> never enters our minds. We think of baptism as something exclusively *for* the individual being baptized, and this it is also. But Barth says it is not simply *for* the remission of sins or *for* the gift of the spirit or regeneration or incorporation into the church, but rather it is the sign or seal *giving assurance* to the baptized that he has received all of these, the total work of redemption.<sup>4</sup>

## V. Barth and Campbell on the Effects or Consequents of Baptism

A final word or two must be said on the effect or consequents of baptism. Campbell speaks of consequents and Barth speaks of effects or "efficacy."

Campbell believes that Adoption, Justification, and Sanctification are all the consequents of the antecedents Faith, Repentance, and Baptism. All three antecedents are necessary for the consequents desired, but the antecedents and consequents do not necessarily stand in relation to each other as cause and effect.<sup>5</sup> It is really impossible to separate the antecedents from the consequents.

For Barth, the effect of baptism is to place the baptized for ever under the sign of the cross. The baptized become marked men, stamped, as it were, for life.

The efficacy of baptism consists in this, that the baptized person is placed once and for all under the sign of hope, in consequence of which

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<sup>1</sup>Garrison and DeGroot, *The Disciples of Christ, A History*, p. 173.

<sup>2</sup>*supra.*, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>Barth, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 27-29.

<sup>5</sup>Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 274.

he has death already behind him and only life in front of him, and in consequence of which his light will shine to the glory of God among the peoples, because his sins are forgiven.<sup>1</sup>

The emphasis Barth makes is the "once-for-allness" of the effect of baptism, no matter what form the administration of it takes or what the state of the candidate. Thus Barth would argue that there is no excuse for "re-baptism."

The glory of baptism among all the parts of the Church's proclamation is its 'once-for-allness.' For Jesus Christ died once for our sins and awakened once from the dead for our justification: . . . once for all.<sup>2</sup>

No abuse of baptism can affect in any way its actual efficacy. It is independent of the purity or impurity, the worthiness or unworthiness of the church which administers it.<sup>3</sup>

What baptism effects, cannot . . . be dependent—so far as it takes and concerns the candidate—either on the quantity of piety or impiety with which he receives the sacrament, or on the Christian perfection or imperfection with which he afterwards, as receiver of the sacrament sets to work and proves himself.<sup>4</sup>

Baptism can no more be annulled by this (the impiety or imperfection of the baptized) than by ecclesiastical misuse. It operates *irresistibly*.<sup>5</sup>

Just because of this (its irresistibility and unalterable efficacy) ANY ARBITRARY RE-BAPTISM INVOLVES A DEFAMING OF BAPTISM AND IS, AS VILMAR HAS RIGHTLY SAID, BLASPHEMY AGAINST GOD."<sup>6</sup>

The practice of "re-baptism" is blasphemous because it is a denial of God's power to work through any form of baptism except that recognized as proper by the church requesting re-baptism. It blasphemously assumes that it alone knows God's mind and that it controls the channels to God's grace. It defames baptism because it admits the possibility of its being destroyed, or annulled, or hindered, or made ineffective simply by the inadequate administration or inadequate reception of it. Barth would argue no human abuse or disorder in the administration or reception of baptism can destroy its divine nature nor make ineffective its divine power.

If we Disciples are open minded enough to accept any criticism or judgment on our present teaching and practice of baptism, we might listen to the great German theologian on this issue. We have, I believe, a witness to maintain before the ecumenical movements in supporting and proclaiming the "rightness" of believer's baptism by immersion, but let us be sure we are supporting our witness on sure and solid grounds and let us be open to the correctives and judgments of all our brother's in Christ. Redeeming the sinful teaching and

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<sup>1</sup>Barth, op. cit., p. 55.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 64.

practice of "re-baptism" seems to me to be the first step we must take. Beyond this there are many points at which our teaching and practice of baptism might be corrected, supported, and enriched by entering into dialogues with the great theologians of our day, as I have tried to do in this small way with Karl Barth.

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# Academic Freedom and the Church College

PHILLIP B. MCKINLEY  
Pastor, Devonshire Christian Church  
Mission Hills, California

## *I. Toward an Understanding of the Term, Academic Freedom.*

Stewart's work on the Academic Freedom problem in the California system of education during the "year of the Oath" suggests that this important term means "The freedom within an educational institution, to teach and be taught the truth."<sup>1</sup> Robert Summers remarks that from the earliest days of our Republic, the emphasis in education has been of freedom rather than loyalty.<sup>2</sup> Of course it must be realized that these statements are made in the context of the loyalty investigations of some years ago when oaths and other certifications of loyalty from the teaching profession were required in the light of the possibility of communist infiltration of our schools. Academic freedom still means the freedom to teach and be taught the truth, but this has not always been the pattern in our country, at least in reference to church related institutions, and in areas of the country where there was a heavy church population. The problems of academic freedom have centered around some two or three main situations or variations of these. The first was the possibility of heretical teaching in the early church supported schools; the second concerned the teaching of "dangerous" scientific theories of one form or another; and the third involved political teaching which was dangerously subversive. This list of three is by no means exhaustive, but it gives an idea of the central battlefields in the fight for the freedom to teach the truth as it is found.

The understanding of academic freedom takes many forms, and these are expressed in a variety of ways. The following quotation seems quite reasonable at first, but the lack of precision could prove troublesome if we tried to use it as a principle of action.

Academic liberty is restricted by the good of the individual and the community; and when a teaching or expressed opinion clearly runs counter to the social good or the individual good, as such, that becomes not academic liberty, but academic license. Academic license is lawless freedom, freedom which recognizes no restraint of any kind. Academic freedom is liberty under law, and here law is social or individual good.<sup>3</sup>

Quite obviously the writer here is suggesting academic freedom within certain limitations, but who sets the limitations and who determines what the good of the individual and the community actually is? If we are never permitted to call into question the values of our civilization, or inquire into the validity of the mores and folkways of our culture then we can hardly claim to have academic freedom. Some feel that the teaching profession should have just such restrictions for the good of our culture. This reasoning boils down to the belief that it is good for our culture not to question our culture. With this definition, teaching becomes passing on the culture without critical evaluation.



## *II. What is a Church College?*

This may be a foolish question to suggest in a paper of this nature since everyone has an idea of the answer. We do, however need to mention what is intended by the term for the purposes of this study. A church college is one which is actively identified or supported by a Christian denomination, with the purpose to provide either a general liberal arts background with some basic religious orientation for all students, or one which trains the professional ministry. Although this study is inclusive of the various graduate seminaries in our country, still the major emphasis will be upon the undergraduate programs.

## *III. He Who Pays the Piper.*

No one would try to argue that the person who supports an institution should have no say in what the institution tries to do. This would be basically dishonest. We support the March of Dimes, or some other charity because we believe in the work that it tries to do, or we do not support it. Only a foolish man would support something in which he did not believe.

In discussing church colleges, we must remember that they were founded because certain far-sighted individuals saw the need for education. It would be a mistake to suppose that the strong interest in education which led them to take the step of founding colleges would not continue with the institution even after founding. The interest of the founders and sponsors of a school should continue; this is a wholesome thing and suggests that education is truly an important matter.

Now it may be that some area of consideration is outside the scope of an institution, and for that reason, consideration is not given to it. Philosophical or Musical interests might well be out of place in an institution purposely founded to provide technical training in the field of engineering. This would properly be excluded, but that is not what is intended by the term academic freedom. We are speaking of the curtailment of teaching of matters which might well fit in the scope of the study, but which, for moral, political or doctrinal reasons are prevented from treatment in class by the administration, the board, the supporters of the school, or some other body with enough governing power to make such a restriction.

It is right that there should be some connection between the school and its supporters, but how much? We have heard it said that "he who pays the piper gets to call the tune," or in more academically respectable words we quote from the inaugural address of Dr. Edmund Davison Soper, who became president of Ohio Wesleyan University. In 1929 he said:

I must now make clear the nature of our obligation at Ohio Wesleyan . . . There is a moral obligation and it is this with which I am here to deal. A solemn weight of responsibility rests upon the university to carry out the aims which the founders had in mind. This becomes all the more weighty when one thinks of the hundreds and even thousands of men and women, preachers and laymen, who have believed in a college of this kind and have sacrificed, sometimes out of pitifully small

incomes, in order to make it possible for the school of their love to continue its mission.<sup>4</sup>

The problem of academic freedom in a church related institution becomes more acute and complex when we realize that the people who founded the school may have had in mind something different than the typical student of the present day might have. The founders may have been more interested in the teaching of some narrow denominational viewpoint than in the imaginative search for truth. Even Thorndike's suggestion that we use the methods of science rather than those of emotion, discussion and persuasion would not solve the problem for these people.<sup>5</sup> If the case is such that the teaching of some particular viewpoint has been the major objective, then academic freedom might well be considered a lost cause. The "freedom for creative activity"<sup>6</sup> in this instance is not an important matter for these people, for there is nothing to create. The founders may have thought that they had a franchise on truth, and therefore felt that freedom for further exploration was unnecessary. Brubaker and Rudy include a statement regarding the transition from dogmatic instruction to the cultivation of the open mind in their chapter on academic freedom. They quote the committee which exonerated Richard T. Ely at the University of Wisconsin.

"We cannot for a moment believe that knowledge has reached its final goal, or that the present condition of society is perfect . . . We feel that we would be unworthy of the position we hold if we did not believe in progress in all departments of knowledge."<sup>7</sup>

Still another text has a paragraph which tersely states the matter and might well be placed here in capitals.

Sects have looked to it (Higher Education) to train ministers or perpetuate dogma; economic interests have looked to it to provide skilled personnel and to advance practical research; the state has looked to it to advance the technique of war; its students have all too often conceived of it exclusively as an avenue to a higher income; a large portion even of its teaching members has turned to it resignedly as no more than an available way of earning a livelihood. In this atmosphere it has been natural for those who have supported education—fortunately not for all of them—to expect to have control in return for support.<sup>8</sup>

This is where our comparison between the piper and payer breaks down.

The true scholar or teacher does not put on a show for the entertainment of the man who pays the bills. The supporter must have faith in the one who teaches in the second place in order to support the whole enterprise. Admittedly this is an ideal situation, but it is an ideal worth working for.

#### *IV. Dangers in Academic Freedom.*

It may seem that we are advocating a blank check in the foregoing statement, and this is often the criticism aimed at academic freedom. In its worst form it is an open door for any person to advocate programs which would destroy society as we know it. Much of the public fear during the days of the investigations of the Un-American Activities Committee were based largely on

this notion. Strictly speaking it would be possible for someone to advocate the overthrow of our government within the context of the university class, but this is highly unlikely.

A report from the Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom of the National Education Association includes this statement which seems germane to the point at hand.

If we insist that the school should be forbidden the consideration of the forces and issues which are constantly remaking society, we limit our planned education to the academic discussion of solved problems which have become a generally accepted part of the social heritage.<sup>9</sup>

I am sure that this greatly restricted view of education would satisfy very few of us. Asking the question about the danger of academic freedom another way, we might suggest some answers.

Who knows what is best to be taught in the classroom? We might go back to the day when students were able to hire and fire the teachers. Surely a student, exposed frequently to the teacher would be able to spot a rotten apple in the barrel. But then is the student capable of this type of judgment? It is true that he comes to learn, not to pronounce judgment. He might be swayed in his choice by the popularity of the teachers' personality, and thus make some tragic mistake in the opinion rendered.

Should the lay board or the controlling church body make the judgment? They are probably never in the classroom, so that their opinion would have to be based upon the testimony of others. Maybe the administration of the school, the deans, president, department heads and so on should make the judgment. Unless they used a type of spy network, they too probably would not have sufficient information to be just in their decisions.

Maybe the public, kept aware of the situation by the press, should be the deciding body. This method would be very cumbersome, and it would depend upon a source of information which is often opinionated.

Short of a crystal ball, the most logical source for judgment in this respect is the teacher himself. A well educated, dedicated teacher will render far more effective judgment upon himself, his content and his method than any outside source. But here again it seems as though we are asking for a blank check for anything that the man wants to do. It would seem that the only practical method of control however, is the dependence upon capable men, who are far more interested in the pursuit and freedom of learning, and the progress of thought and society than any outside source. Inner direction is the best direction. The sense of "calling" in the teaching profession is a far more impressive stimulation to do a good job than the tests of orthodoxy of which we read in early times.<sup>10</sup>

The dynamics of this particular question will probably never be answered to the satisfaction of all concerned, yet some pragmatic point of agreement should be sought for the good of society, education, student and teacher. I do not propose to indicate just where that point may be found, but the probability is that

serious problems will ultimately be brought to the attention of the university administration, and action will be taken by this authority.

In this connection, Taylor writes,

Who shall decide on the needs and who shall decide how they should be fulfilled? On the one hand, we do not wish to hand over all responsibility to an elite corps of professional educators who then decide what is good for the country and its young people. On the other, we do not wish to give to political-minded or dogmatic individuals and groups within our society the power to dictate what should be taught and what should be learned.<sup>11</sup>

Eddy reminds us that the college exists for service to the people.<sup>12</sup> This original purpose should be kept in mind by the faculty member who might be tempted to teach something which would endanger society. It might be said, however, that if what he teaches is truth, regardless of how it may be accepted, how better could he serve society than to indicate some of its weaknesses? MacIver points out that the social significance of academic freedom has been underestimated. "Academic freedom, in its proper significance, is not primarily for the benefit of the scholar but for the benefit of society."<sup>13</sup> On this point, I doubt that a more adequate response can be given to this question, at least within the limits of this paper.

### *V. Must We Have Academic Freedom?*

Education always suffers when those who control it have some special axe to grind. Dogmatic orientation in Higher Education can hardly be the climate for the search for ultimate truth. It becomes a mere process of passing on the culture, or the doctrine, rather than the search for truth. "Why search any longer for truth? Here it is! We have it!" In this context, there is no need for academic freedom. The president of a college for religious training has written, "Academic freedom is to be commended in areas of research where ultimate truth as found in the revealed Word of God does not pertain. But it is dangerous indeed for one, especially one who is a professing Christian, to tamper with the truth of God's Word under the guise of academic freedom."<sup>14</sup>

Still another writer would seem to agree somewhat with this position, for he heads a chapter in his work, *God and Man at Yale* with the title, "Substitutions of 'Academic Freedom'".<sup>15</sup> This author seems to feel that the dangers inherent in academic freedom are too great to permit it. We wonder what system he would advocate.

Thus far the dangers of academic freedom that we have met in our brief considerations seem to be that those who learn, might learn something new; that what they learn might not be compatible with some of the current values of society. The objection is never formulated by suggesting that they might find some new truth in their search that we had not had before. Much of teaching is passing on the collective experience of man, but new experiences are to be suspect. One of Walter Lippman's objections to the theories of Nietzsche is that we don't know what dangers this man's thinking may get us into.



It is well to be cautious, and to consider all alternatives to a philosophical system, but is this a valid reason for total rejection of a need for academic freedom?

## *VI. We Have Nothing to Fear in the Search for Truth.*

LeFevre indicates in his book, *The Christian Teacher* that the teacher with religious orientation gives a basic philosophy of life to those he teaches "... Religion is the trust; theology is the intellectual interpretation of that upon which we rest our trust."<sup>16</sup> How very important it is then that we do not kid ourselves; that the foundation or philosophy that we build will hold up. If we protect it from all criticism, then we can never be sure that it will stand up as ultimate truth.

Several writers have chosen to use the phrase, "Liberty and License" in explaining the dilemma which we face when we accept the need for academic freedom.<sup>17</sup> Does liberty in teaching mean that any person can do anything he wishes in the classroom situation, but the community should feel safe in granting to the teacher the right to use his wisdom to its best advantage. We give the surgeon great liberty when he operates on us. In fact we grant him so much liberty, that we are usually unconscious when he does his work. We have faith in him and his training to the extent that we are willing to place our lives in his hands. We do much the same with other professions. What is so unusual about having the same faith in the ability of those who lead our youth in the search for truth.

We must admit that the professions have some system for removing undesirables from their ranks. There are the bar associations, medical associations, ministerial synods and so on, but the problem of teaching can be just as carefully guarded by the counteracting publications by means of which scholars come into conflict with one another. Eventually, through thesis, antithesis and synthesis they finally arrive at some approximation of the truth.

Kirk quotes Sidney Hook's definition of academic freedom which gives further explanation of this idea of checks and balances.

It is the freedom of professionally qualified persons to inquire, discover, publish and teach the truth as they see it in their field of competence, without any control or authority except the control or authority of the rational methods by which truth is established. Insofar as it acknowledges intellectual discipline or restraint from a community, it is only from the community of qualified scholars which accepts the authority of rational inquiry.<sup>18</sup>

Hullfish seems to think that we have not gone far enough in the quest for truth. He feels that too much of our education is mere equipping the populace with skills. Our real task it seems is one of learning how our freedom of inquiry can be accelerated.<sup>19</sup> If his contention is true, then the most serious problem facing education today is learning to accept the need for academic freedom.

## *VII. Without Criticism There is No Growth.*

Whereas the administration and governing board of many church related colleges might be willing to accept the validity of the statement which heads this section, they would probably state that in certain areas of thought there is no need to grow, therefore there is no need for criticism in these areas. The process of higher criticism of the scriptures is a case in point. Here, their particular view of scripture dominates their thinking.

In all other areas of life, we may see a need for criticism, but in the area of scriptural revelation, there is no need for it. We may study in order to acquire the information contained therein; we may try to systematize what we find there, but as for inquiring into the authorship, or meanings of the books which compose scripture, this is out of the proper area of study.

We can almost add as a general rule, that the more extreme the theological position of the group which sponsors a particular school, the stronger is the prohibition concerning this "extra-scriptural" inquiry. It is almost as though those who hold a particular position are fearful lest more study prove them to be in error. Thus, attitudes of "lack of faith" and "guilt" are charged to those who seek to study beyond the particular denominational literature and creeds. It is proper to study the founders of the denomination, and the elaborations of their viewpoint, but it is morally wrong to call into question those statements of faith which have been handed down from generations within the religious community.

Now the opposition to academic freedom from this point of view seems to be based upon a "vested theological interest" and the fear that it may be overthrown. If the particular religious community does have the truth, then there is nothing to fear in the quest for additional truth. If their system is valid, then it will hang together in spite of how thorough the criticism against it might be. President Soper had some powerful things to say in this connection.

There is a danger which has been pointed out as possible in the whole argument which I have been making. It is the danger of paternalism, of the hot-house, of the sequestered noon, as if we were afraid that our students might get a breath of free air, might come into contact with a genuine atheist, or really be thrown into perplexing doubts. Such an outcome is very far from my thought. Students on coming to college must be taken into the full stream of the world's life, they must know what is going on. Of all the sins of the teacher and of an educational institution there is none more heinous than that of obscurantism. In no way can confidence be lost so soon or so completely as by withholding facts or divergent viewpoints. The student has the right to demand that he be faced with every side of a question, each side being presented faithfully and fully. For we must remember always that education that is really what its name implies demands that the personality and freedom of every student be respected, that there shall not be a suggestion of compulsion, and that when a conclusion is reached it is his very own.<sup>20</sup>

The inaugural words of this man give us added respect for his administration. If in the case of some controlling powers, they are fearful about some logical gaps in their own thinking, then it is no wonder that they want to suppress academic freedom by associating it with those who are disloyal to the faith.

Within the last ten years, one segment of a larger denomination organized colleges, then sought both funds and students on the basis that they were "loyal" colleges, both to the scriptures, and to the doctrinal position of the denomination. Nothing was said about the search for truth, for supposedly the truth had already been found. It seems evident that the suppression of academic freedom in many church related colleges is a device to protect their own doctrinal viewpoint. The concern for political association probably does not play too large a part here. There is some concern about the teaching of certain ideas of biological evolution, but this is not as serious as it was a few generations ago.

Much would be gained by all concerned in the realization that no one has anything to lose in the search for truth. Critical examination cannot harm truth, it only supports and strengthens it. Too often one who has the "courage of his convictions" has been thought of as a person who stands up for his beliefs no matter how difficult they are to support, and no matter how much opposition he may have because of them. It would seem to this writer that one who has the "courage of his convictions" would more properly be one who has enough courage to let his convictions stand under fire to test their truth. It takes real courage to have one's opinion doubted, questioned, criticized, and then finally either accepted or rejected. It takes no courage to guard your viewpoint from all attack.

Speaking personally, if my opinions are inadequate, I want to know it. If they are substantial, I want to know that too. I will never know this if I never express myself, or if I never permit my viewpoint to be examined by others, or if I never examine it myself.

We have nothing to fear in our search for truth.

## DOCUMENTATION

<sup>1</sup>Stewart, George R., *The Year of the Oath*, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Summers, Robert E., *Freedom and Loyalty in Our Colleges*, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup>Lazarsfeld, Paul F., and Wagner Thielens, Jr., *The Academic Mind* (answer from a respondent), p. 122.

<sup>4</sup>Soper, Edmund Davison, *Academic Freedom in a Christian College*, p. 8.

<sup>5</sup>Thorndike, Edward L., *The Teaching of Controversial Subjects*, p. 22.

<sup>6</sup>McCallister, W. J., *The Growth of Freedom in Education*, p. 487.

<sup>7</sup>Brubacher, John S., and Willis Rudy, *Higher Education in Transition*, p. 306.

<sup>8</sup>Hofstadter, Richard, and C. Dewitt Hardy, *The Development and Scope of Higher Education in the United States*, p. 133.

<sup>9</sup>Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom, *What Policies Should Guide the Handling of Controversial Issues?*, p. 11.

<sup>10</sup>Hofstadter, Richard, and Walter P. Metzger, *The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States*, p. 155.

<sup>11</sup>Taylor, Harold, *On Education and Freedom*, p. 86.

- <sup>12</sup>Eddy, Edward Danforth, Jr., *Colleges for Our Land and Time*, p. 270.
- <sup>13</sup>MacIver, Robert M., *Academic Freedom in Our Time*, p. 188.
- <sup>14</sup>Sutherland, Samuel H., "A Message from the Editor. Re: Academic Freedom," *King's Business*, Nov. 1960, p. 10-11.
- <sup>15</sup>Buckley, William F., *God and Man at Yale*, p. 136.
- <sup>16</sup>LeFevre, Perry, *The Christian Teacher*, p. 35.
- <sup>17</sup>Kirk, Russell, *Academic Freedom*, p. 1.
- <sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 10.
- <sup>19</sup>Hullfish, H. Gordon, *Educational Freedom in an Age of Anxiety*, p. 78.
- <sup>20</sup>Soper, *Ibid.*, p. 17.

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# A Message of Meditation to Missile-Minded People

or

## A Dialectic Between Liberals and Conservatives

JACK R. SIBLEY

Disciples Divinity House, Chicago, Illinois

It was first decided to entitle this article merely "A Message to Modern Christians;" but it was readily recognized that the use of such a common phrase would probably not in any way catch the eye of the readers. One of the reasons for this fact would seem to be the fact that the ministers of our group, or any denomination as far as that goes, seem to receive a certain degree of personal consolation in classifying themselves at either extreme of the Christian theological task; that is, as either Liberal or Conservative. By means of such credentials, they consequently designate themselves to be either a firm defender or a faithful delineator of the faith, but seldom, if ever, endeavor to find a substantial or consistent middle ground. All theological students will immediately recognize that there is a theoretical problem involved here, which forms the very basis of the interpretation of the Christian message. What we are most interested in pointing to here is the practical aspect implied in this for the general attitude of the minister and layman toward working out a meaningful method for his problem solving. In other words, we do not want our ministers (and laymen) to become so especially missile-minded that they will explode themselves out into space so far that they will lose almost all contact with the real substance of that from which they have had their origin and from which they have made their preliminary take-off.

It must be understood in this respect that we are not here in the process of condoning or condemning either of these terms or their seeming varied aspects, but are rather endeavoring to speak with both in focus. We can see definite values as well as definite dangers within both movements. There is a definite necessity for both conserving and conveying the message of the Christian hope, but there are the accompanying dangers of excess which lead to petrification or purgation. It is perhaps for this very reason; namely, that there is a definite element of value in both positions that we are so apt to feel there is nothing destructive or pernicious in the choice of one over against the other. However, and this is the thesis of this article, it is at this point of a lack of sincere dialectic that we sow the seeds for somewhat drastic implications in regard to the potency and affection of the contemporary message of the church!

The real problem seems to arise from the fact that when a minister, or layman, places himself at the extreme of one of these phases, this places him somewhat on the defensive, and he thus becomes, in some sense, negative in his attitude. That is, our symbols for action are no longer positive Christian affirmations. Our motivation tends to come as a counteraction toward a posi-

tion which we consider to be a wrong interpretation of these symbols, without any value whatever. Thus we find ourselves acting from a negative type of motivation. We are in motion, perhaps even in orbit, but our purpose would seem not so much to gather data for the use of our fellows (no matter what their present race, color, or creed) as it is to be seen by the competing group (or nation as the case may be).

Perhaps a very apt example of the destructive element within such an attitude may be taken from the situation facing us as a nation today. Because of our tension (we dare not call it fear, do we?) toward another leading country, our nation seems on the verge of placing itself on the defensive and acting almost entirely from a motivation as to what this other nation does or does not do! In doing this, however, it may very well be that we will lose our capacity and opportunity to make a positive and constructive witness for our way of life. In relationship to this situation we are coming very close to losing contact with the great symbols of our heritage such as the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and in their place have come to possess the very poor attitude and practice of pointing to the symbols which we feel stand for revolution, injustice and tyranny. Such motivation comes, therefore, not from faith in our own power and activity, but merely from a reaction to others; and so, takes on the characteristic of fear. Undoubtedly F. D. Roosevelt was well aware of the destructive aspects of such an attitude when he made his notable statement to our nation that "the only thing we need to fear is fear itself." Many other examples could be pointed out, but perhaps this one will serve as a very good omen of the attitude which will be needed by Christian men and women if they are to serve their faith in any meaningful way.

The only conclusion we can reach therefore, gentlemen, as students of the church and the history of theology, is that the answer lies somewhere in between the extremes. What is needed is not "conversion" (which is negative in that it almost always refers to the crossing over of the other person), but rather "conviction" (which, if correctly understood, is seen to refer first of all to the person himself).

Almost all of us who are parents hold ourselves to be mature and conscientious in our care and concern for our children. Consequently we do not make a decision for our child until we are thoroughly convinced ourselves that this will be the most beneficial choice in relationship to the child. And even more, if we are good parents, we will not only give thought to our own knowledge and experience which relates to finding the correct answer to the problem or situation under hand, but will give honest consideration to the capacity and views of the child who comes with the question or problem. We realize the example may seem somewhat ingenuous, but the point is that, if we take this manner in the care and consideration given to our natural children, surely we ought to do the same with our children and brethren in the faith. The method would appear to be by means of dialectic in each case.

We would leave you then exactly where we began; except for the fact that we hope this article has started you to thinking! And please remember, as you ratiocinate concerning this matter, that there are basically two powers inherent within existence, the power to affect and the power to be affected. The more one studies these powers however (e.g. through a consideration of

the basic philosophical problem of the One and the Many) the more he is able to see that they are made up of the same power of being. This should help to point us to the fact theologically that we have much more in common than we many times care to admit, and that we need to use our powers of affecting and being affected in a way which will be beneficial to the Kingdom. In other words, we need much more dialectic and much less dichotomy. What we need is not Missile-Minded People with Misguided Motives, who go shooting off in any direction they please, but Motivated Men with Mediating Manners, who measure out as carefully and clearly as possible the essence of the Christian gospel as contained in the Christ. "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for the other."

Real life is a dialectic; between man and other men, and between man and God. We hope this article succeeds in some small way in pointing to the true dialectic which, we trust, shall someday be reached in all Christian groups in greater detail and greater sincerity.

# *The Scroll*

*The Journal of the Campbell Institute*

## THE NATURE OF A UNITED BROTHERHOOD

A. T. DeGROOT

## THE DECLARATION AND ADDRESS: SOME COMMENTS ON THE TEXT

HOWARD E. SHORT

## AUTHORITY OF THE MINISTRY

ROBERT L. DADY

## BRIDGE THE GAP

ROBERT D. CHAMBLESS



## From the President

Our plans are completed for the sessions of The Campbell Institute at the Los Angeles Assembly in October. Our meetings will be held in the Renaissance Room of the Biltmore Hotel at 9:30.

Monday evening, October 1st, Wayne Bell, J. Robert Moffett, and Ray Wallace will lead a discussion on the topic "Disciple Contributions and/or Compromises in a United Church Merger."

Tuesday evening, October 2nd, the topic "A Theology of Worship for Present-Day Disciples" will feature W. J. Jarman, Robert A. Thomas, and Josh L. Wilson as discussion starters.

You will not want to miss either of these scintillating programs.

Also, of course, we will have election of officers for 1962-63 and will hear a financial report from our "wizard of the figures," Bob Chambless.

We are pleased to be able to get this issue of *The Scroll* to you this much in advance of Los Angeles. Be on the look out for the next issue which will come sometime after our 1962 meetings.

I do want to express my appreciation to Editor Bill Howland, Vice President Bill Jolly, and Secretary-Treasurer Bob Chambless for their excellent work this year. They have made possible the fine year we have had.

See you all in Los Angeles!



## Officers of the Campbell Institute

President, G. L. Messenger, Stillwater, Oklahoma

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# The Nature of a United Brotherhood

A. T. DeGROOT

My long-time associate, President D. E. Walker of Milligan College, and I each have thirty minutes in which to unite the historic Restoration Movement that began in the nineteenth century. It may be that we shall have to be content with something less than complete success; but by the explicit command laid upon us by the prayer of our Lord every sensitive disciple must keep the goal of the unity of the church in his vision. Other church bodies may be able to defend their reason for existence as witnesses to neglected truths, such as the sovereignty of God, the reality of Pentecostal visitation, the priesthood of every believer; but by reason of our inheritance we must ever give primacy to that glittering goal, the effective unity of the body of Christ on earth. For this purpose our movement was born. To cease in our efforts and experiments in behalf of oneness would be to relinquish sonship in the family that gave us birth.

One lesson of history is that union within freedom is an evasive and slippery object to be grasped by human beings. Perhaps some species of octopus with single vision but multiple means of embrace could fix and fasten upon it, but for the days of our flesh we must count the cost of our sinful pride and our petty partisan aims. Nations desperately long for peace but at the same time thrash and flail and belabor even their friends as dark impulses command their mood. Leaders of union labor speak from the platform about improvement of skills and productivity, but in caucus settle for evening the scores for old battles lost. On so "enlightened" a scene as a university campus professors will produce passion, believe it or not, in behalf of traditional or progressive methods in education. In every walk of life we exhibit our far less than perfect apprehension of the unity of purpose and of work that could make a paradise of this earth.

One price of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers is an acknowledgement that the Christian ministry is as human and as beset by sin in its holy work as are any of its fellows in so-called secular vocations. This does not mean that we have the right to be content with our weakness, for the nature of our calling brings us into partnership with the Divine; but it does mean for the sons of the Restoration movement that our search for unity must be pursued even while knowing that on earth we will usually fall short of a perfect demonstration of it.

It is important to recall that *we never were a completely united brotherhood* which only subsequently lost its pristine oneness. To speak of "restoring the Restoration" is to allure with fiction but with little more. The unity of our fathers was in their quest, not in the specific programs under which they found their several groupings. With nothing less than a testy spirit Alexander Campbell took dead aim on Walter Scott in 1838 and wrote "I am thankful that I never put the title 'Christianity Restored' nor 'Gospel Restored' to any thing I ever wrote." Yet they remained one in fellowship within the search for the

divine intention for their lives. The oldest tributary of our movement is in North Carolina. It has given us a unique regulation of our white ministry, and nearly one-half of all of our American Negro members, but it represents cherished inheritances that vary significantly from general brotherhood practices. From 1804 onward Barton W. Stone led in gathering the largest group which entered into the union of 1832, and it was a fellowship with doctrine and practice about baptism and the Lord's Supper not identical with the thought of the Virginia Reformers. In all of the history of Christianity the ordinance that has been the touchstone for unity or division is the Lord's Supper; yet, in this central act of outward and visible organizational fellowship our entire Restoration movement, including the present-day anti-organ Churches of Christ, have moved 180 degrees from strictly closed communion to a clearly open table. Consider two dicta of Alexander Campbell, one in 1826 and the other in 1850. Barton W. Stone had asked Mr. Campbell whether the unimmersed should be given even occasional access to the Table. The Bethany leader replied,

I know of no scriptural authority for such a discrimination. It is arbitrary and unreasonable. If I can admit an unimmersed person once-a-month for a year to all social ordinances, I can for life or good behavior. When I say, I can do so, I mean that all precepts, precedents, and scriptural reasons, authorize such a course.

But in 1850 it was the same man who wrote,

This kissing of the cheek, this extending of the right hand of Christian fellowship, this complimentary compellation of our "orthodox fellow-Christians of different communions," while not a crumb of consecrated bread, nor one drop of consecrated wine, will be extended to us any more than to Turks, Jews, or Infidels, is the quintessence of sublimated hypocrisy; the very spirit of guile and dissimulation from which every pure, and generous, and sensitive heart recoils in mortification and disgust.

It is one of the strangest experiences of doctrinal metamorphosis that any communion should undergo such a change and do so without significant controversy. It represents what must be nothing less deep than subconscious argumentation from a fixed hope for widest fellowship that permitted this transformation to come about with regard to so central a doctrine and so obvious a public practice. The significance of open communion in the whole of the Restoration movement today is a matter that we have never evaluated adequately, and gives us our highest hope for equal moves toward fellowship in other departments of Christian life with other communions.

This series of consultations between cooperative and independent Christian Churches is being held because of another major problem of thought and practice. Basically, the question is, *Should Christianity seek to have a visible organization, or organizations, or form of any kind?* I shall try to give one man's answer with a clear proposal of what that organization may be.

Readers of Ralph Waldo Nelson's book, *The Experimental Logic of Jesus*, may believe with him that Rome subverted the Christian faith by insisting upon

casting the church into the same mold as the empire; and that medieval and Reformation Christianity remained hypnotized by this same insistence upon empire or national church organizations, combinations of church and state. History shows that there were occasional dissenters from these powerful movements, the Anabaptists being only one group of examples, but always their fate was like that of the soldier to whom Tweedledee referred in *Alice in Wonderland*, when he said, "One of the worst things that can happen to you in a battle is to have your head cut off." Congregationalism as a form of church government had to go into hibernation from Nicea in 325 until the birth of the glorious American ideal of a free church in a free state, that wonderful outcome of our Revolution.

Under the privilege of this religious liberty we are in consultation to decide whether the totality of churches needs any organization; that is, are we under orders as Christians to be as effective as possible through organization for fulfilling the command of the Great Commission? When we are told that we will be judged by our fruits there is not only a personal but also a corporate responsibility involved.

The fathers of our restoration movement were not unanimous in responding to this question, but a very great majority of them were in agreement about it, including all of the "Big Four," the two Campbells, Scott, and Stone. Alexander Campbell said:

Christians must regard the church, or body of Christ, as one community, though composed of many small communities, each of which is an organized member of this great national organization; which, under Christ, as the supreme and sole Head, King, Lord, and Lawgiver, has the conquest of the whole world in its prayers, aims, plans, and efforts. Hence there must be such an understanding and agreement between these particular congregations as will suffice to a recognition and approval of their several acts; so that the members or the measures of one community shall be treated with the respect due them at home, in whatever community they may happen to be presented. (*Christian System*, 3rd. ed., p. 76)

In 1840 Campbell pled specifically for an almost presbyterian type of inter-congregational government (see *Millennial Harbinger*, p. 130). An episode in the same year called forth his mature thought on this theme. The church in Baltimore expelled four members, who wrote to him about the right to appeal. He replied,

When any particular congregation offends against the constitution of Messiah's kingdom by denying the doctrine, by neglecting the discipline, or by mal-administration of the affairs of Christ's church . . . then said church is to be judged by the eldership of other churches, or by some other tribunal than her own, as an accused or delinquent member of a particular congregation is to be tried by the constituted eldership of his own congregation.

He proposed that the case should be referred to "two or three neighboring



churches," and added, "No community called *a* church is absolutely independent of *the* church of God, but [is] amenable to the whole church for the administration of its affairs." (*Millennial Harbinger*, 1840, p. 513; cf. 1841, p. 41 and 1842, p. 63.) In 1850 he sharpened his focus on this topic:

The independence of any community in Christ's kingdom is not an independence of every other community in that kingdom, in whatever concerns the interests of that kingdom. This would, indeed, be a fatal error to the progress and prosperity of that kingdom. In what concerns every private community, it is, indeed, independent of, and irresponsible to any other; but it is both dependent on and responsible to every other community, in all that pertains to the interest, honor, and prosperity of all. (*M.H.*, 1850, p. 286.)

At a deeper level of serious theological concern, Campbell confronted the tendency of some irresponsible congregationalists to evade the larger, social, and world-embracing duties of the kingdom of Christ by conjuring up a doctrine (as in Lutheranism) of the invisible church. Instead, he presented an ideal in which the church was meant to have a definite, visible, and united organization on earth. The church is related to and responsible for the welfare of society, just as in the New Testament individual salvation is related to a corporate group, with its visible practices of baptism, the Lord's Supper, and discipline. He affirmed,

There is but one real Kingdom of Christ in the world, and that is equivalent to affirming that there is but one Church of Christ in the world. As to an invisible church in a visible world, schoolmen may debate about it till doom's day, but we know nothing of an invisible church in our portion of creation . . . It is, then, a fixed fact in Christianity that Jesus Christ has but one church, or kingdom in this world, and that this church is composed of all the communities properly called the Church of Christ. (*M.H.*, 1853, pp. 106-107.)

Barton W. Stone brought into the movement a conception of the ministry which was well in advance of simple congregationalism and local autonomy. But the liberty-loving pioneers among whom he and Campbell moved on the American frontier would not accept anything resembling the bonds against which they had revolted in both political and ecclesiastical life, and insisted upon a rugged individualism in local church life and organization.

Starting with the strident objections of Jacob Creath, Jr., to the organization of a national missionary agency in 1849, a body of opinion against societies was crystallized into a movement which resulted, by 1906, in the separate existence of the anti-organ, anti-society, and anti-pastor Churches of Christ. The majority of the churches, however, continued their search for an embodiment, an organization, of the responsible type of polity that Campbell and Stone had favored. Z. T. Sweeney, pastor of Tabernacle Church, Columbus, Indiana, wrote the constitution of the present International Convention of Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ), in 1917. From then until now both cooperative

and independent leaders have agreed that societies or agencies are proper tools for doing common Christian work. The key to the International Convention system is this statement about it written by Frederick D. Kershner.

The individuals who constitute our societies appeal constantly for funds to our churches as churches. Now, if churches pay the bills, why have not churches the right to cooperate in order to review and pass upon the agencies to which they contribute, and which expend their money?

Within the structure of this bi-cameral convention (one house the Committee on Recommendations, the other the mass meeting) significant development has taken place. The desire to get away from a multitude of competing missionary and other societies led, in 1920, to the creation of the United Christian Missionary Society, formed from six major agencies. In 1923, a Commission on Budgets and Promotional Relationships was established, consisting of laymen and ministers, to encourage the agencies to practice the virtues of cooperation, fairness, business sense, and efficient service. By 1934, this led to the creation of Unified Promotion, designed "as far possible" to give "a unified plan of promotion . . . to every righteous cause" in "a proper approach to all our local churches." Its growth is seen from its beginning in 1935 with:

- 7 national boards,
- 23 state societies, and
- 5 colleges

to a cooperation in 1962 of:

- 8 national boards
- 39 state societies, and
- 22 educational institutions.

A Council of Agencies was established in 1950 to provide an inclusive inter-agency fellowship involving the whole of cooperative life.

How truly the group thought of the Disciples, with regard to their duty in the organization and administration of their inter-congregational life and work, has moved in the direction of responsibility may be seen in the changes that have taken place in the use of State convention types as of 1957 and then as of 1962:

	1957	1962
Delegate conventions .....	7	14
Committee on Recommendations .....	11	12
Mass meeting, with protective clauses .....	7	6
Mass meeting only .....	13	7

We should also be reminded that in Great Britain our Disciple church polity has gone far beyond the forms of consultation and delegated authority seen in America. The result there is a type of organization that is nothing less than the strongest type of presbyterianism, with uniform salaries for all ministers, assignment of these ministers to their parishes by a central committee, etc.

And all of this has been done with full belief that the churches are following the admonitions of the New Testament.

In the light of this long development of our thought and action as a brotherhood, creating a number of agencies, and ordering their structure and work through a consultative fellowship known as the International Convention, we come now to the crux of our problem. The question is, Does this mean that no persons or congregations have the moral right to act in these fields without using these particular agencies? A good reply is given by Willard M. Wickizer.

... The United Christian Missionary Society is "fraternal" rather than "ecclesiastical" in its organizational base . . . It would be a mistake to endeavor to make the United Society the "official" national missionary and educational agency of the brotherhood. We should oppose as unwise and untrue to fact any effort to convince an individual or congregation in the brotherhood that they must of necessity cooperate with and support the Society or else leave the brotherhood. Of course, I personally believe in the United Christian Missionary Society and I propose to do my missionary and educational work through it; and I would like to see every other individual in the brotherhood work with and through it, but I am not prepared to say that those who do not see it my way should not be considered Disciples of Christ. (From paper read before the Biennial Meeting of the Home and State Missions Planning Council, St. Louis, December, 1948.)

This means that if an individual or a church believes that the particular agency created by the general action of the churches and approved by the International Convention is not, in his or its opinion, at that time doing its duty, these have the right to make their offerings to any other agency of their choice, such as the American Bible Society, Church World Service, the Church Peace Mission, or any other of the hundreds of such societies as exist. It means that if some feel that our mission includes an evangelistic message to Christians (Lutherans, Eastern Orthodox, etc.), they may express this through the European Evangelistic Society, which also reports to the International Convention. It means that if some persons or churches feel that new witnessing work should be opened up in countries presently unreached by the United Society (e.g., in Brazil), it is their privilege to band together to do this. However, since the judgment of the main body has been that new work should be opened only as existing missions are adequately financed, both parties (the United Society, and the new independent group) should operate as friends, even while disagreeing as to the wisdom of the new expansion. It certainly means that neither side should call names, such as 'apostate' or 'dis-loyal' to those in disagreement. These are the necessary demands of democracy, and any departure from them represents a disservice to the total cause. Within a democracy any minority is obliged to prove the wisdom of its independent action by successful service over a period of years, always doing so with full reports to the whole body even when it does not have the contemporary consent and approval of that body. The aim of such minority action should be to win the approval of the larger body by meritorious and harmonious action.

A democratic brotherhood thinks slowly and moves cautiously, but it is

more apt to find the truth about polity and faith than is the case with oligarchies and monarchies in religion.<sup>1</sup> The long story of our adoption of loose cooperations, district and state and then national societies, the relating of these to each other in behalf of the welfare of the total cause, shows that the Christian Churches (Disciples) have pondered seriously and experimented hopefully in a search for biblically authorized ways of common life and work. Their career clearly shows a trend of movement among originally independent churches toward awareness of their common responsibility.

There is a distinct theological connotation, even an affirmation, of the nature of the church, in the partly unconscious adoption of certain terms by the major working agencies of the Christian Churches (Disciples). These include the *United Christian Missionary Society*, and *Unified Promotion*. The Lordship of Christ in the work of the church implies a responsibility to elicit a *wholeness of response* from all persons and churches in their living witness to faith. There is equally a demand for some device for ascertaining the *mind* that exists in the total church, and the education of that mind into continued and new expressions. This is what the International Convention does. There is a basic theology which produces a principle and an agency of cooperation in religion—a strong belief about God-given freedom within fellowship, because *positive declaration of fellowship is basic to the biblical understanding of the church*.

The older, uncritical or unthought assumption in International Convention fellowship was that the agencies in it were there on the dog-eat-dog basis of each one for himself, promotionally, regardless of the fortunes of the others. Across the years a new understanding of the meaning of fellowship has arisen. There were days, not long ago, when a large home mission agency would not grant the use of its list of supporters for circulating the materials of other agencies. This is no longer the case. All agencies now in the International Convention (with one exception—and that one has been largely “independent” from its beginning) understand that they aid each other; that an attack upon one is an attack on the others. This does not mean that attack cannot be permitted or never would be justified, but it does mean that such attack is to be an open thing within the whole group, to be amenable to the judgment of the whole group, and is not to be a covert or single attack apart from the wisdom of the

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<sup>1</sup>A very careful study of this idea, as it appears in the thought of Alexander Campbell, is presented in *Apostle of Freedom*, by D. Ray Lindley (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1957). A paragraph in Chapter IV says: “Campbell thus appeared to seek for the congregation of believers the status of what McDougall calls the ‘deliverative group.’ Just as McDougall affirms that in a deliberative group it is possible for the group thought to result in a decision and an action ‘higher than that which its best minds, independently could have achieved,’ Campbell said that he had often been led, not only to reconsider, but to abandon some of his former conclusions, ‘on suggestions and objections made by those whose education and capacity might be regarded as of a very humble rank.’ Such group action, he said, sought not simply the communication of knowledge, nor the execution of a program but ‘the proper development and direction of the human powers.’ ” An earlier student noted this crucial idea thus: “Campbell falls back upon a principle which is uniquely his own, his unswerving faith in the correct judgments of the enlightened common mind. In a word, the majority of those who love the Lord must always decide such questions, and the minority, as in all social compacts, must quietly bow to its will.” (Jesse Kellems, *Alexander Campbell and the Disciples*, New York: R. R. Smith, 1930, p. 392.)



whole community. The several agencies see themselves as parts of a larger whole, with inescapable mutual responsibilities.

This means the end of the era when some agencies took membership as "reporting" agencies within the International Convention with the expectation of reporting — only; they did not mean to subject themselves to the group thinking and group disciplines. Any such agency clearly was only *using* the International Convention as a means of reaching a large constituency for its own support with no sense of having a responsibility for the welfare of the whole brotherhood and all its agencies. When this became clear, the Brazil Christian Mission withdrew, in 1961, rather than to be associated with agencies that it did not want to help. There is one agency still within the Convention which from its beginning has refused to be anything other than a free-wheeling society, making its own requests for money but having no significant participation in the larger task of mutual aid.

As I see it, the choices before us are fairly clear. We are discussing the question as to whether our churches need to have any visible organization apart from an utterly independent local congregation. We have traced Alexander Campbell's rejection of this idea. We could choose (1) episcopacy in church government with its priestly assumption parallel to the divine right of kings. We could choose (2) an oligarchical church superintendency derived from Reformation state churches. We could choose (3) a representative congregationalism which expresses awareness of the wholeness of the church being made up of local congregations in responsible, democratic cooperation, much after the pattern of our great American political government. Or we could choose (4) complete anarchy as our theory of any relationships beyond the local independent congregation. I do not know what other choices there are.

I am sure that many members of this Consultation will correct me if I am wrong, so may I be so bold as to say that it seems to me that tentatively the Independent fellowship has chosen Type No. 4 above. But I think the honest student can understand why this present choice has been made. One reason is that conservatives do not want to be in fellowship with liberals. One speaker at the Stillwater Consultation (1961) said "I am an ultra-conservative biblicist." He added, "we must have a uniform attitude toward the Bible for unity." This is a sure recipe for endless schisms, but not a way to unity. The editorial in *Christianity Today*, November 24, 1961, also demanded doctrinal uniformity, but its view of the Bible would have shut out our Independent speaker at Stillwater. Apart from this theological reason for our present-day separation there is a more practical one, which affects our jobs as ministers and as missionaries —and as professors in Bible colleges, and as presidents thereof. Am I right in sensing that our most difficult problem is, Can we have a united brotherhood in which there are whole local churches honestly committed to a united inter-church promotion of missions and other general work, as in Unified Promotion, but also whole local churches equally committed to supporting the faith-sent missionary who may or may not make any reports of his work? And, even more problematical, Can we expect to succeed with some cases of local churches in which a "United Society" group exists and lives in genuine peace with an "Independent Missions" group?

I believe we can have such a United Brotherhood. We can do so, however,

only by understanding clearly in what our unity consists. It is not to be determined by missionary methods. It must be a unity determined by a common commitment to the Lordship of Christ as only Savior. Under such a commitment we have room for a variety of methods in Christian work. It is important, however, that we do something positive about declaring our unity within a "life precious faith." Let me be so bold as to sketch a possible step toward a greater unity.

What I propose is not really new, but simply the application of what many of our European brethren have found to be joyfully helpful in growing together. There several national, international and inter-denominational groups have (in Germany, for example) a *Kirchentag* (Church day). It is far more than a day; it is a couple of weeks with varied programs for study, inspiration and witness. The heart, the power-house of it is its witness in behalf of unity. In Germany the vastly predominant church is the *Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland* (Evangelical Church in Germany), called the E.K.I.D. Even its founders and present-day administrators cannot agree on whether it is one church, or one federation of churches, or just what it is. They are fully agreed, however, that it has become a precious fellowship for all of them, and a real experience of growth toward unity, particularly at the point of the *Kirchentag* and its public witness of a felt unity.

What could be happier for all spiritual descendents of the historic American and inter-national Restoration movement than to participate in a day of public witness to their common faith? Our leaders in all portions of the larger family certainly have the ability to make this possible. All we need is the will. I submit that in this day when group life and group power is more and more a reality, we have an increasing duty to pay heed to our Lord's prayer, which is his command, for the fullest possible unity of his people. As only one step toward this end, we could plan to have the national conventions of our existing major groups meet occasionally in the same or nearby cities at the same time. For the present let us acknowledge that in theology, which is human thought, we have not arrived at agreement.<sup>2</sup> Let us agree that for an undetermined period we shall

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<sup>2</sup> "We could nullify our message for the unity of the whole church by setting the seal of official sanction upon some set of theological formulations which would be supposed to 'tell the world where we stand' doctrinally. Beyond the affirmation of loyalty to Christ and the acceptance of his lordship as the bond of unity among Christians, nobody can tell the world where we stand, because we do not all stand on the same theological ground. There is almost as much theological diversification among Disciples as there is in the whole body of American Protestantism. This diversification has tended to increase as more and more Disciples have emerged from the state of theological naivete which characterized our leaders in earlier days, and it will probably increase still more in the future. This gives Disciples an unprecedented opportunity to demonstrate to the world by a concrete example that it is possible for a wide variety of doctrinal views to coexist peacefully and fraternally within one fellowship of Christians. Our central thesis is that this kind of unity with freedom and diversity can be projected on a larger scale which will include all Christians, and that no other kind of unity is either possible or desirable. Meanwhile, as to where we stand, let us stand on a platform as broad as that upon which we think a united church ought to stand." W. E. Garrison, *Heritage and Destiny* (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1961), p. 153.

disagree about methods of work. But on a Sunday common to the coordinate conventions would come the "Church Day," for which some good term should be chosen. It might be—

United Church Day  
Primitive Church Day  
New Testament Church Day  
Restoration Rally Day

Some wits might even want to wear tags reading "I'm more primitive than you are," or "Silence is golden but women don't know it," or other affirmations of being back-to-the-Book.

The central magnet which for a few years might be our only common act (for unity is a thing that must grow) should be a whole participation in the observance of the Feast of Remembrance, with Christ our Lord as the inviting host. Already our people have the greatest annual Protestant Eucharistic Congress, in the Lord's Supper at our various conventions. Christ is the source and the cause of our unity; why not say so, unitedly? I am persuaded that if we will do only this for a few seasons, other kinds of unity will come as un-structured gifts. I believe that our Churches of Christ brethren, as individuals if not as church units, will be happy to share in that part of our life as Christians about which, historically, we have never been divided, that is, that it is the privilege of the church to spread the Lord's Table, and the duty of the individual Christian to examine himself, and so partake. If we examine ourselves honestly in this day of increasing power in mass witnessing and mass movements, how can we do any less than to exhibit our given unity? Methods in missions and schools of thought in theology must wait for the mind of the persons and groups of persons to render judgment upon them, but judgment will be upon us if we fail to witness the unity that our Lord has given to us. Together we should reverently praise the one Name that is above every Name. His blessing and his design for unity will in time be his gift to his people.

# The Declaration and Address:

## *Some Comments on the Text*

HOWARD E. SHORT

Sesquicentennial Convocation, Bethany, West Virginia, October 25, 1959

It is, of course, an honor to be invited to these historic surroundings for the purpose of speaking about the work of Thomas Campbell a century and a half ago. It is an honor, however, full of responsibility which one has to assume, having consented to speak.

From the subject assigned, it is obvious that one must say something, first of all, regarding his own concept of what he is trying to do. Therefore, let it be fully understood that when I speak "from the perspective of the Christian Churches," I have certain procedures in mind and do not have certain other ideas in mind.

Anyone who was raised in this church and has thought or heard anything about its past has some ideas of its relationship to the rest of the church world. As a practicing professor of church history for a good portion of my working career, it is natural that I have thought about these matters in some detail. Therefore, I have no hesitation in saying in public what I have often said, in substance, to classes of future ministers, about the *Declaration and Address*.

On the other hand, I have no such exalted idea of my own conclusions as to believe that they are indeed a summary of the point of view of the whole body of Christians to which I belong. I have taken no poll and what I have to say does not propose to be a summary or a consensus. It is to be hoped that there might be some evidence in what I say as to what I think the universal interpretation should be and what I consider it to be, in the rank and file of our churches.

The one thing that must be kept constantly in mind is that when any one individual in a free church speaks his own mind or attempts to explain what other people believe, there are bound to be individuals at each point who would say the opposite thing. This is very important to remember when one speaks. It is not necessary to preface every sentence with, "Now, this is only my own point of view on the subject." If we stop to think, we realize that that is always the case when a person speaks or writes.

We need to be sure, also, that the same principles apply to the hearer. If we disagree with what we hear, we may imagine that we, the hearers, are representative of the whole. There is no harm in wishing that what one believes should be the general view. In fact, we all live this way, when we live at our best, to a great extent. One does not live and believe in the hope that everyone else will live and believe some other way. But I have not come here to further any divisions that may exist among us, by launching into an apologetic for myself, and against others.



These preliminary remarks have been made, not alone to explain the fact that the speaker is an individual, a fact which you could already observe, but also because I feel that they are, to some extent, explanatory of the spirit and form of the *Declaration and Address* itself.

It is my purpose to look at these documents and call attention to certain expressions and ideas that should be lifted up for consideration, according to my judgment. Most of them are not especially well-known, judging from the articles and books that one reads and the conversations he hears. To reread the *Declaration*, the *Address* and the *Appendix*, as was necessary, of course, as a preliminary to the work in writing this paper, was an eye-opener.

If one might compare the experience, Alexander Campbell said on one occasion that we ought to pick up the Bible and read it, from time to time, as if we had never seen it before. Thereby, we would make new discoveries of truth that we had overlooked. This was something of my experience in reading these documents again. Each time one reads, he reads in the light of what he knows at that particular time. It so happens that I have done a great deal of reading, listening and writing on the subject of unity since I read these documents last.

First, we notice that the meeting held at Buffalo, August 17, 1809, consisted of "persons of different religious denominations." This is stated in a kind of preface on the second page. Thomas Campbell made no effort to pretend that he was not caught up in the denominational differences of the time.

It is also stated in this same paragraph that the purpose of meeting was "to form themselves into a religious association." This interested me considerably, and I noticed that the phraseology was kept throughout the writing, pretty largely. I had known that the Brush Run Church was not organized until somewhat later, but somehow I imagined that these people who met on August 17, 1809, knew that they were becoming a church, even though I did realize that they were consciously trying to avoid being a denomination. Nowhere in these documents do I find any reference to the necessity, or the scriptural reasons, for changing from an association into a church, a thing which they did on May 4, 1811, less than two years later.

The next thing that caught my eye was the expressed feeling of brotherhood with members of all the churches, and the hope that this brotherhood might take visible form. Following the familiar phrase about being "tired and sick of the bitter jarrings and janglings of a party spirit" there is a more important phrase which says that, "We would also desire to adopt and recommend such measures as would give rest to our brethren throughout all the churches." (Page 3.) We would be hard put to it to list all the expressions about a feeling of brotherhood with others which Thomas Campbell mentions.

When we come to the seven main points of the *Declaration*, we notice that the first one begins, "Resolved, that we form ourselves into a religious association under the denomination of the Christian Association of Washington." (Page 4.) Here, of course, denomination is used in a slightly different sense, but not too much different, than on page 2.

There was a further proposition that they should "encourage the formation of similar associations." Lest any reader confuse these organizations with the church, the fourth proposition states clearly, "that this society by no means considers itself a church . . . nor as at all associated for the peculiar purposes of church association;—but merely as voluntary advocates for church reformation."

It occurs to me that we have never quite portrayed, in our generation, what this group of people visualized themselves to be. Proposition 5 states the same idea in a different way, that they are organized "for the sole purpose of promoting simple, evangelical Christianity" and that all they want to do is to "reduce to practice that simple, original form of Christianity, expressly exhibited upon the sacred page."

There is no picture of a group of churches in the New Testament, surely, with various and sundry associations of Christians operating somewhat outside the church structure in order to teach the church what simple Christianity was. The corrections were undertaken within the church structure.

Presumably, Thomas Campbell had in mind that when the associations had done their work, the churches to which these individual persons belonged would then be restored to New Testament perfection, and the associations would have no further need for existence.

The *Declaration* is short; it takes only two and a half pages in the original booklet in which it was published. There follows an eighteen-page *Address* which is signed by Thomas Acheson, as well as by Thomas Campbell. We assume that Thomas Campbell prepared the document. The purpose of the *Address* was to further explain the principles in the *Declaration* and to tell a little about how they proposed to carry out their plans.

One of the interesting things to note in the *Address* is the different terms which are used for the church. Very early, it speaks of the church being so corrupted "with those accursed divisions, that there are but few so base, as not to find admission into some professing party or other." Then it goes on to say, "that the scriptural purity of communion (is) banished from the Church of God" as a result of this situation.

A few pages later he speaks of "The Church of Christ" and the necessity of conforming to the model and adopting the practice of the primitive church.

Later the document says that it is "a pleasing consideration that all the churches of Christ, which mutually acknowledge each other as such, are not only agreed on the great doctrines of faith and holiness; but are also materially agreed, as to the positive ordinances of gospel institution." In the *Appendix*, it speaks of "the first christian churches walking in the fear of the Lord." (Page 27.) Christian is spelled with a small letter through the documents, so we cannot learn much from that fact.

A bit later it is explained that "by the christian church throughout the world, we mean the aggregate of such professors, as we have described; even all that mutually acknowledge each other as christians, upon the manifest evidence of their faith, holiness and charity." It seems evident to me that the question of

what to call the church was not an issue with the writers of the *Address*. Sometimes the term "the christian institution" is used. (Page 37.) Often it is just "the church."

Throughout all this discussion there runs the assumption and sometimes the direct statement that there will be religious associations, local and national in scope, with a standing committee, a secretary and treasurer, "with full powers to act and do . . . whatever the Society had previously determined, for the purpose of carrying into effect the entire object of its institution." (Page 5.)

There is no question but that the *Declaration* and *Address* grew out of the white heat of experience. In this regard a phrase that was first suggested to me as a possible theme for my address here is to the point. In a very real sense, the *Declaration* and *Address* make up "an American formulation of the christian message." The same divisions which existed among the churches on the American frontier existed in the old country; indeed, that is where they came from. It seems highly improbable that there would have been any facing up to the problem of disunity in that generation, in Scotland and the north of Ireland.

On the other hand, it was certain that someone would come along who could no longer keep silent in the face of man-made divisions. Already there had been an outbreak in the Synod of Kentucky. By the time Thomas Campbell arrived on these shores, Barton W. Stone and his cohorts had been dismissed from their Presbytery, they had formed one of their own, disbanded it, written its last will and testament, and were operating in a more loose-knit fellowship than that of the Christian Association of Washington.

Now, it was happening in Washington County, Pennsylvania. To say that these documents are American formulations does not mean that they have a nationalistic, or even mildly patriotic theme. It is, rather, to recognize that old seed produced new fruit when sown in new soil.

The disunity of the church is the disturbing factor that one observes in the background of all of this writing. Perhaps this is the proper place to observe that Thomas Campbell was not the first person, by any means, who set out to reform the church, or to restore it to its pristine beauty. Even the sixteenth-century Protestant reformers could not lay claim to that originality. Back of them we think of Wycliffe in England and Hus in Bohemia. And, more than two hundred years before that, Peter Waldo was having his difficulties with the established church in the hills of southern France.

Is there anything unique about this document which we have now had for a century and a half? First of all, I would like to say that uniqueness does not add divinity to persons or documents. The search for uniqueness, I would say also, is an American preoccupation. Everything has to be the first, the oldest, the most, the biggest, or the something! It is the internal content of the *Declaration* and *Address*, as they depict the practical formulation of the prayers and hopes of these people, that is meaningful.

There is something somewhat different, even so. It is the method by which the divided church was to be made whole again. We hear a great deal of talk in our time about God doing this at his own pleasure. I certainly would not

want to rule out the fact that God is still the head of his universe and that he will perfect his plans, in spite of us, if not with our help. On the other hand, this document makes it quite clear that there are many things that men can do to assist God in his work.

So Christian associations are to be formed. They are positive committees of action, not negative forces of ill-will. That is evident throughout the documents, especially in the *Appendix*.

Note for example various remarks in the *Appendix*. It is written: "Therefore, we have nothing new. Neither do we pretend to acknowledge persons to be ministers of Christ, and, at the same time, consider it our duty to forbid, or discourage, people to go to hear them, merely because they may hold some things disagreeable to us; much less to encourage their people to leave them on that account . . . May the good Lord prosper all such, by whatever name they are called; and fast hasten that happy period, when Zion's watchmen shall see eye to eye, and all be called by the same name." (Page 24.) It was as if they truly expected an internal reformation which would result in the sloughing off of all human differences, leaving the church with her essentials equally professed and expressed in all places.

Much has been said about the attitude of the Campbells to the creeds and confessions. The *Appendix* says, "We may appear to our brethren to oppose them, yet this is to be understood only insofar as they oppose the unity of the church . . . It is the abuse and not the lawful use of such compilations that we oppose." (Page 25.)

"Our intention, therefore, with respect to all the churches of Christ is perfectly amicable. We heartily wish their reformation; but by no means their hurt or confusion."

This is very interesting language, especially in the light of what has happened to us as a people in the intervening one hundred fifty years. All these churches, to which they still felt themselves belonging, since they were only an Association, are called "churches of Christ." This is quite different from what happened in many cases of reform, and indeed it is quite different from the way that many of us act and talk today.

The usual pattern has been for a leader or a small group of people to denounce the existing body in which they have had membership, depart, and begin worshipping with a new set of rules or creedal statements. It is true that the Christian Association was meeting by itself, but the difference is that the members considered themselves members of churches "of different religious denominations." (Page 2.) The Christian Association was not trying to be picaresque about its views.

In speaking of the Christian law it is said that "we mean that whole revelation of faith and duty expressly declared in the Divine Word, taken together, or in its due connexion, upon every article: and not any detached sentence." (Page 27.) Many a new body of Christians has been created by doing this very thing; taking some detached sentence and making it all-important. We think, for example, of the people who consider the scriptural expression about picking up serpents and drinking deadly things (Mark 16:18) is the one real test of a person's religion.



Thomas Campbell made an impassioned plea for unity on the specific teaching of scripture and liberty in matters of opinion. Furthermore, he realized that even matters that looked to him as if they were absolute and final teachings of scripture might not look so to another. This is the great ground of discussion in our own century. It is not enough to say, "In essentials unity." What are the essentials?

Campbell said, "Does not the visible scriptural unity of the Christian church consist in the unity of her public profession and practice; and under this, in the manifest charity of her members, one towards another; and not in the unity of the private opinions and practice of every individual? Was not this evidently the case in the apostles' days?" (Page 30.)

This is a very important observation—public profession and practice, and charity toward one another in unity; these are the marks of the oneness of the church. How many divisions we observe today, not only in the church world at large but amongst ourselves, which exist for no other reason than that men have insisted on "the unity of the private opinions" of individuals. Notice also how much importance we sometimes attach to unity of doctrine and how little interest we have in charity toward one another. Thomas Campbell was determined that these must go hand in hand.

This leads us to comment on the three great evils expressed in the document. The first is "to determine expressly, in the name of the Lord, when the Lord has not expressly determined." (Page 32.) The second evil is "not only judging our brother to be absolutely wrong because he differs from our opinions; but, more especially, our judging him to be a transgressor of the law in so doing; and, of course, treating him as such, by censuring or otherwise exposing him to contempt . . . saying, as it were, 'Stand by, I am holier than thou.' " (Page 33.)

The third and final evil mentioned in this connection is "still more dreadful," it is said. This comes about when we "proceed as a church, acting and judging in the name of Christ; not only to determine that our brother is wrong, because he differs from our determinations: . . . (but by) casting him out of the church, as unworthy of a place in her communion." Here, Thomas Campbell must have been thinking of some of his own experiences.

Not only did Thomas Campbell not expect what he called "strict literal uniformity" but he said that there is not "anything, either in scripture or the nature of things, that should induce us to expect an entire unity of sentiment, in the present imperfect state. The church may, and we believe will, come to such a scriptural unity of faith and practice, that there will be no schism in the body; no self-preferring sect of professed and acknowledged Christians, rejecting and excluding their brethren . . . But that all the members should have the same identical views of all divinely revealed truths; or that there should be no difference of opinion among them, appears to us morally impossible, all things considered. Nor can we conceive, what desirable purpose such a unity of sentiment would serve." (Page 38.)

The *Appendix* makes its final plea for a consideration of these proposals for unity on the basis of the difficulties which are being experienced in preach-

ing the gospel to the American Indians. There is quoted a reply of principal chiefs and warriors of the Six Nations in council assembled at Buffalo Creek, State of New York, in the presence of the Agent of the United States for Indian Affairs, in the summer of 1805, to the Rev. Mr. Cram, missionary from Massachusetts to the Senecas: "Brother, we understand that your religion is written in the book. You say that there is but one way to worship and serve the Great Spirit. If there be but one religion, why do you white people differ so much about it? Why not all agree as you can all read the book? . . . We never quarrel about religion. We are told you have been preaching to the white people in this place. Those people are our neighbors; we are acquainted with them. We will wait a little to see what effect your preaching has upon them. If we find it does them good, makes them honest and less disposed to cheat Indians; we will then consider again of what you have said." (Page 54.)

Then Mr. Campbell adds, "Alas! Poor people! How do our divisions and corruptions stand in your way? . . . But your conversion, it seems, awaits our reformation."

We have certainly given enough of the *Declaration*, the *Address* and the *Appendix* to see something of the tremendous heritage which is ours in these documents. Such conclusions as I have are of minor consequence compared to a complete understanding of what is written here. However, they are given for whatever worth they may have.

First, we do have, in the *Declaration* and *Address*, an American formulation of the Christian message. This certainly does not mean that the gospel of Jesus Christ is a different message in America than it is elsewhere. It is American in its technique and approach. In those days, one did not tamper very much with the status quo, except to rebel from it occasionally and start out on his own. Only on the American frontier could one have dared to attempt such a thorough overhauling of existing church organization, on the human side, as that which Thomas Campbell proposed.

For this insight and for the courage to act upon it, the church is debtor. Whether men have always seen fit to follow the particular understanding of Thomas Campbell or not, many men, of many faiths, have tried many ways, on the basis of this same general approach, to see what can be done about division in the church.

Second, from all the nineteenth century reformers and among all the documents, debates, addresses and sermons which were produced by them, the *Declaration* and *Address* stand as the most thoroughgoing example of the way Christians could stand together once more on the Word of God.

It does not violate either the Will of God, the revelation of God in scripture, or the reason of man. All are carefully respected.

Both theology and ethics are there. Thus far, we have not seen fit to follow very much of what he had to say. Human opinion is equated with the revelation of God. Good will is met with ill will. Acts of inclusion and exclusion of members have replaced a willingness to tolerate differences in human opinion.

If we really want to celebrate the sesqui-centennial of the *Declaration* and *Address* we will first study it again and then try to implement it.

# Authority of the Ministry

ROBERT L. DADY

Disciples of Christ tend to believe that the ordained clergy has no special authority. Our emphasis has been that all Christians are ministers and that each Christian has a ministry to perform. Many feel the "Priesthood of All Believers" means an equality in all functions of Church responsibility. They believe that all Christians, no matter what their function, are on the same level as far as authority is concerned.

It is our conviction that the specialized role of the ordained minister does set him apart from the laity. Because of his function, the minister ought to have a recognized authority which lay people do not have. There is a thin line between the authority of the minister and the authority of the laity, but the difference should be made clear. We believe an understanding of the minister's authority will help establish a better working relationship between minister and people than now exists.

Authority can have many different meanings. There is a need to distinguish between authority by rule and teaching authority. Authority by rule is capacity to command service, or compliance from others. It is an institutional power to enforce decisions. Teaching authority rests on the inherent witness of the truth communicated. One who is respected as a special source of guidance in a given field has teaching authority. Teaching authority does not depend on the person's ability to enforce decisions. A minister has teaching authority because he is a special source of guidance through which God's will and power is made known to men.

When we speak of authority in this article, we mean teaching authority. It is the minister's right to be heard with respect. A minister has authority *to* preach and teach the gospel. Authority enables him to render this service. The gospel has the power to change lives. Because the minister is called to the function of preaching the gospel, he also has authority that is derived *from* the gospel. The authority derived from the gospel carries over into other areas of the ministry beside preaching and teaching.

## *The Priesthood of All Believers*

According to the book of Hebrews, Jesus Christ is the great High Priest. He is the world's Mediator and Advocate before the Father. The question is, In what ways in history does Jesus represent God to the world? What are the earthly forms through which Jesus represents God to the world today? The answer is in the ministries He calls His Church to perform. Jesus represents God to the world through the ministries of the Church. These various ministries are outlined in 1 Corinthians 12:27-30 and Ephesians 4:11, 12 (J. B. Phillips).

"Now you are together the body of Christ and individually you are members of Him. And in His Church God has appointed first some to be His messengers; secondly, some to be preachers of power; thirdly,

teachers. After them He has appointed workers of spiritual power, men with the gift of healing, helpers, organizers and those with the gift of speaking in 'tongues'. As we look at the body of Christ, do we find all are His messengers of spiritual power, all able to heal, all able to speak with tongues or all able to interpret the tongues? No, we find God's distribution of gifts is on the same principle of harmony He has shown in the human body."

"His gifts unto men were varied. Some He made His messengers, some prophets, some preachers of the Gospel; to some He gave the power to guide and teach His people."

These two passages indicate that there is a division of labor in the Church. They indicate that all Christians are called by God, but that all *are not* divinely appointed to the function of the preaching ministry. God calls all the members of the Church to fulfill the many necessary functions in His Kingdom. All Christians are divinely called to proclaim the message of reconciliation, to serve the world and each other in love. That is to say, all Christians are priests, but all Christians are not called into the preaching ministry. Since the early days when Jesus called and chose the Apostles to preach and teach the gospel, a special importance has been given to the preaching and teaching ministry in the life of the Church.<sup>1</sup>

The minister's function is to serve the brethren by serving the gospel. It is because of the specific function of the preaching ministry that a special authority is given it. It is because of the preaching role that the office of the ministry is related to the High Priesthood of Jesus Christ in a special way. Jesus mediates God to the world in a unique way through the preaching ministry.

### *The Unique Function of Preaching*

God uses the preaching of the word (the gospel, kerygma) as His special way of bringing salvation to men.<sup>2</sup> The preaching of the crucified and risen Christ as a means of grace is God's way of bringing men to salvation. As the minister declares "Christ is risen" and "Christ forgives your sins", men's hearts are strangely moved to repent and receive Christ. Though it is true that a man working on an assembly line is working for God no less than a clergyman preaching a sermon, there is a distinctive difference. The difference is that God saves men through preaching. He created the Church through preaching and renews it in every generation through preaching. 1 Corinthians 1:21 and Romans 10:14, 15, 17 affirms this high value of preaching. (R. S. V.)

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<sup>1</sup>Since preaching and teaching are so closely related and cannot be rigidly separated, we shall consider this over-all type of ministry under the general category of 'preaching'.

<sup>2</sup>We use gospel in this paper to symbolize the authority of the Bible. The gospel is the core and center of the Bible. It is the kerygma, the witness to the event of Jesus Christ. It is the word of God to men. It is God's message and Revelation of Himself to give men salvation.



"For since in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe."

"But how are men to call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? And how can men preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news!' So faith comes from what is heard and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ."

Not only is the ordained minister called to preach the gospel in which there is inherent authority. Every Christian is called to preach (or proclaim) the gospel in some way. Preaching cannot be confined to the formal setting of a sanctuary with a congregation in attendance. Christ can be preached to an individual or to a family. There is an important difference, however, between the preaching of the ordained ministry and the laity. The ordained and elected minister preaches in an official capacity. He preaches as the chosen representative of the Church.

Because the minister is called to the specific function of preaching the word (and through this function to be a guardian of the essential truth of the Sacraments),<sup>1</sup> a special leadership and authority rests with him. He has been called by God to perform a particular function which carries authority with it. It is not the preacher but the message that carries authority. The real authority is the gospel, the message the minister proclaims. However, just as the Bible has a unique authority because it is the vehicle through which God's saving message comes to men, so the minister has a unique authority when he preaches this message.

There is a trend in contemporary Church life which emphasizes the value of the lay witness. Certainly, day by day witnessing is an important part of the Church's life. However, without the stimulus of preaching by the "set apart" ministry, the lay witness would soon die out. Both preaching by the clergy and lay witnessing through the week are vital and important.

That all Christians are ministers in one sense does not take away from the special role ordained clergy are called by God to perform. That certain persons are ordained does not take away from the important function of the laity. If kept in proper balance, the priesthood of all believers and the function of the clergy do not conflict. They supplement each other.

### *The Office of the Ministry*

The office of the ministry is the way in which the Church feeds itself with the gospel. Because of this, the office of the ministry has been a contributing factor in the continuity of the Church from one generation to another. This

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<sup>1</sup>The preaching of the gospel and administering the Sacraments cannot be separated. It is the faithful preaching of the gospel that interprets the meaning of the Sacraments. Although the minister may not officially preside at the Lord's Table, because he preaches, he is still the most vital agent in administering the Sacrament.

is not to suggest the uninterrupted witness of the Church from age to age has come about in a wooden or mechanical way. The witness to Christ has continued unbroken because ministers have rightly preached the gospel. The office authorizes preaching and this function further gives the office authority. As ministers continue the true witness to Christ, the authority of the office is theirs. A consecrated and prophetic laity has also helped to preserve the witness of the Church. However, we maintain that the key to the continuity of the Church has been faithful preaching.

When a minister occupies the office, there is a sense in which the Church preaches through him. He is the representative of the people and speaks for them. There are other times when the minister is more a representative of God than the people. He preaches judgment and the need for repentance. He speaks as Christ's ambassador to the Church.

### *The Call of the Minister*

God gives a special gift to each person he *calls* to perform a needed function in the Church (1 Cor. 12). "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:4). The gift God gives the preaching ministry through the call is inspiration (charisma). It is an inner authority. It is an authority within related to the individual's penitence, humility and faith.

The minister's authority does not come from the institution of the Church by itself. It was said of Jesus that he spoke as one having authority and not as the Scribes (Mark 1:22). The Scribes had an institutional authority. Jesus possessed an inner authority. God's call, not the institutional ceremony, is the essence of the minister's authority. This includes both the secret call and the Church's call.

It is the gospel that changes people, not the minister's inspiration. Nevertheless, his authority is dependent on the gift God gives through the call. God's gift of an inner authority is bound to affect the minister as he preaches for good or for ill. Then too, one only has the right to preach the gospel in an official capacity when called by God for this function.

That one is called by God into the ministry means he is convinced God wants him to be a minister. God gives the compulsion that sends him into the ministry. One does not choose the ministry because he drifts into it. He does not choose the ministry because nothing else appeals to him. Ideally, a person chooses the ministry because God chooses him for it. God leads him into an experience (or experiences) whereby he recognizes it is God's will that he be a minister.

The reality of sin forces us to qualify this paragraph on the "ideal" call. It is doubtful that most calls are altogether dependent upon God's initiative. Human motives are seldom pure. Sinful influences such as the desire for prestige, power and martyrdom play a part in leading men into the ministry. In spite of these less worthy motives, God is able to use the minister. In spite of the minister's sinfulness, God speaks through him. Ministers are like Peter who denied his Lord, but who was used by God anyway.

The personal call is completed by the Holy Spirit working through the

Church. The Holy Spirit works through the ordination service of the Church to call a person into the ministry. Through ordination the Church accepts and confirms the personal conviction of the candidate that he has been called by God. One's conviction that God has called him to be a minister is thus tested by the needs and wisdom of the Church.

The final act of confirming the call comes when a local Church nominates a minister to be its pastor. The local Church nominates, but the Holy Spirit must call the candidate. When the Church installs the minister, it re-affirms its faith in him as a called man of God. The Church accepts him as its representative and in a special way the representative of God.

### *Conclusion*

The minister's authority, then, is derived from three factors. They are the function of preaching, the office of the ministry, and the call of the minister.

First of all, authority comes from the preaching of the gospel. Because he has been ordained into the office of the ministry, the minister has *official* authority to preach and teach. He speaks as the Church's representative, but also as God's representative to men. Preaching the very word of God to man is what the minister is called to do. His calling is to preach with the authority of the Scriptures behind him. The minister's authority is derived from the fact that he is God's special agent through which Jesus Christ and the power of His resurrection come alive in men's hearts.

Secondly, authority comes from the office of the ministry. Since persons are called by the Church into the office of the ministry to feed the Church with the gospel, the office of the ministry symbolizes the authority of the gospel. Because of the office the minister is a spokesman for God in a different way than the laity. Through the office he holds, the minister officially represents the Church and the Bible. It is not only the peculiar function of the office that gives the ministry authority. Authority is also part of the office because through the function of preaching, it has been a valuable contributor to the continuity of the Church.

Thirdly, the minister's authority comes from the fact that he has been called by God into the ministry. He is chosen. He is a minister because of God's initiative, not because he sought the ministry. Just as Jesus personally called the Apostles one by one, so the Holy Spirit continues to call persons into the ministry. Sometimes he calls men through a mystical encounter. Sometimes he calls men through experiences that point toward the ministry. The Holy Spirit further works through the channel of the Church to complete the call in an official way.

Because of these three related factors, his call, the office and the role of preaching, the ordained minister has a distinctive authority. It does not come through any one of these factors alone, but through their inter-dependent relationship. Authority of the minister depends on the gospel proclaimed. The office has authority because of the function of preaching peculiar to it. The call into the office of the preaching ministry depends on God as He works through the individual and the Church.

# Bridge the Gap

ROBERT D. CHAMBLESS

There are a number of problems which ought to be a matter of real concern to the ministers and to the membership of our churches—all our churches—in our area. They are not unique among us in the Dallas area, but this does not make them any less real or any less important. One of these is a tendency toward short pastorates, which in general is understood not to be good. I have been in my present ministry for three years and eleven months. Only eleven senior ministers are now serving churches where they were when I came to Dallas out of a total of forty-four churches. (However, three people, additionally, have served longer ministries in the field of Christian education.) It has become increasingly recognized that longer average ministries are essential if both churches and ministers are to realize their best potential in service to persons and to the community and to God. There are no long and effective ministries unless careful plans are laid both by the minister and the congregation. There are many reasons for short pastorates—some few good reasons and many bad reasons, and the enumeration and explanations of these reasons lie far outside the time limits of this report. Each local church should be encouraged to investigate carefully this field.

Another problem—related to the first and yet in some respects even more fundamental—is the fact that, in general, congregations have one image of what the total ministry of *the church* should be, while the minister has another image. Then, additionally, congregations have one image of the ministry of *the minister*, while the minister has a different image of his own ministry and in what it should, or does, consist. There is a real lack of communication between minister and congregation at this point which is more general than most of us imagine. To bridge this gap is not at all easy. It is difficult, for example, for most ministers to preach really helpfully to their own congregations about the ministry on such occasions as “The Week of the Ministry” in such a way as not to seem to be making a special pleading for his own case. Congregations likewise are reluctant to enter into a truly helpful study of “the ministry” when comments or suggestions made in the best possible spirit may be construed by the minister as criticisms of him personally. Consequently, both minister and congregation tend to “gloss over” a real experience of communication about both their relationship to each other and their relationship together as they face the community in the task of making the Gospel real in our world today. I personally believe that a real attempt ought to be made to use “The Week of the Ministry” as a time both for (1) pulpit exchanges and (2) study sessions within churches led by visiting ministers (or a team of minister and laymen from another church) in this particular area of concern. Such an exchange ought not to be a time for the visiting minister to preach his favorite sermon (which does not require preparation). Rather it should be an occasion to interpret the Christian ministry of *the church and of the minister* in such a way as to be a strengthening of the bond of understanding and service between the minister and the church. Let it be clearly understood that I do not mean to say that con-



gregations have an inadequate image of the minister's role while the minister has an adequate image. The reverse may be the case, or both images may be poor. I pass no judgments; I do mean to say the images are *different*, and they are not informed and corrected by the other.

A third area of problem and concern lies in the matter of recruitment to the ministry. We are failing badly at this point. It is cold comfort—or no comfort at all—to note that this is a common failing among all Protestantism. Also Judaism has found that this is their problem as well—and Roman Catholicism is no stranger to a great deal of difficulty at this point. The many reasons for such a problem, again, lie beyond the scope of this report. Much has been written and said at this point. But most of it has been said *by* ministers and *to* ministers whereas, again, this must become a concern of the whole church. And more, each individual Christian parent must become a “committee of one” to ask himself seriously the question, “Why have I not truly laid before my own child a forthright charge to consider very seriously the full-time service of Christ and His Church? Why have I not?”

A fourth major problem lies in our inability as congregations and in our reluctance as ministers to go outside our own congregations to seek help and direction, guidance and sympathetic understanding, when a problem arises in ministerial leadership. We were not always so! Early in the life of our Brotherhood Alexander Campbell suggested that we ought to have more “Jerusalem conferences.” That is, when a problem arose in a congregation, he suggested that competent and consecrated leaders of other congregations ought to be consulted and their help sought. But by and large our congregations and ministry alike were so carried away by their new-found autonomy that they were much opposed to anyone coming in to *their* church and “telling them what to do.” Again, it is my understanding that a good many years ago right here in our city Graham Frank, W. W. Phares, and L.N.D. Wells were pretty frequently consulted as a sort of unofficial but very effective “presbytery” or “plurality of elders,” (to use a more familiar term to Disciples) in times of problem. Such a procedure was then and ought to be now a purely voluntary procedure. Any congregation and any minister certainly may go to whom they wish; my point is that a better procedure can be and ought to be found than simply “running to the state office,” further burdening—and sometimes without reason—a man who is already trying desperately to do more than is possible and more than we have a right, as a brotherhood here in Texas, to expect. A mutual ministry of minister to minister and congregation to congregation is not simply a nice way of spreading around the work. It is, I believe, both suggested and demanded by the New Testament as a way of putting the church in order and of taking the “Good News” to a needy world.

I would not be fair to the total picture if I left the impression that the ministry of the church and the ministry of the minister is one large mass of problems. Let it be in the record that the magnitude of the challenge has multiplied almost geometrically as our metropolitan area has grown arithmetically. Many sensitive leaders, ministerial and lay, have performed great feats of service to the cause of Christ in past days—and many are performing even more heroic-

ally today. We *do* move from grace to grace. The complexity and size of the task of ministering has become almost unmanageable, but this has not deterred many fine ministers from dipping deeply into the life of our community and giving their task their all. And there are many striking examples of congregations who have, with commendable sensitivity, entered into the problems of the ministry both with understanding and with real personal involvement of themselves in the "fellowship of the furtherance of the gospel." But we have only scratched the surface in applying our historic plea for Christian Unity to our own local congregations. We have thought that Jesus' prayer that "They may be one, even as Thou and I are one, that the world may believe" applied in some nebulous sense to our relations with Baptists and Methodists—or to Disciples in New Zealand—or to the whole conciliar movement. There should be a definite sense in which these scriptures about unity speak to our condition both within and among congregations. When one suffers, we all suffer; when one congregation and/or minister hurts, we all die a little; and when there is a victory, we all should share in rejoicing. We are one; and the sooner we know this, deep in our bones and in our being, the sooner we can rightly bear the name we often bear too lightly: Disciples of Christ.



"But first let me say how heartily I dislike and disagree with the tiresome parrot chorus which goes up each year to the effect that Christmas has become an overcommercialized racket. My reply to that is that if anyone is foolish enough to let the Christmas spirit get out of hand, that, surely, is his own silly fault. As far as I can judge all that has happened since I was a child is that the goods suitable and unsuitable for giving and receiving on December 25 have become more and more attractive and tempting. But to blame the manufacturers and the shopkeepers for knowing their business so well, and to accuse them on that score of putting over a racket seems to me to be just plain "daft" as they say in Yorkshire . . . Racket my foot, and likewise fiddlesticks."

Clarence Elliott in "Christmas, 1957" in *The Illustrated London News*. No. 6188. Vol 232. January 11, 1958, p. 59.



# THE SCROLL

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THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST IN THE CONSULTATION  
ON CHURCH UNION

GEORGE G. BEAZLEY, JR.

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WILLIAM L. REED



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# THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST IN THE CONSULTATION ON CHURCH UNION

GEORGE G. BEAZLEY, JR.

*Executive Secretary, Council on Christian Unity  
Indianapolis, Indiana*

On December 27, 1962, I attended my first meeting of the Executive Committee of the Consultation on Church Union. In case this title has not yet become a part of your vocabulary, it is the effort to develop a plan to form a North American Church, truly catholic, truly reformed, and truly evangelical, a plan that grew out of a proposal set forth by Eugene Carson Blake in a sermon in Grace Cathedral in San Francisco on Sunday, December 4, 1960.

I was at this Executive Committee meeting because the first meeting of this Consultation, held in Washington, D. C., April 9-10, 1962, invited three churches to become participants in it. These were: the Evangelical United Brethren, the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ), and the Polish National Catholic Church. I was there because by Resolution No. 50, passed without dissenting vote by the Annual Assembly of the International Convention of Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) held in Los Angeles, September 30 to October 4, 1962, Resolution No. 47 of the preceding year was reaffirmed, authorizing the Council on Christian Unity to participate in this Consultation through the committee named by it for this purpose. I was there because the chairman of our Christian Unity Commission, William Jackson Jarman, had asked me to be our representative on the Executive Committee. The chairman of the Consultation, and therefore of the Executive Committee, is James I. McCord of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., president of Princeton Seminary. Its vice-chairman is Charles Parlin, a prominent Methodist layman and one of the six presidents of the World Council of Churches. Its executive secretary is George L. Hunt, a pastor of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

Two of the three churches invited to become participants have elected to do so: the Evangelical United Brethren Church and the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ). The Polish National Catholic Church has not yet made its decision because its national body has not met since the invitation was issued. Each church participating has one member on the Executive Committee in addition to the officers. The Methodist Church was represented at this meeting by Norman Trott, though Bishop Randall Phillips is their usual representative. The Protestant Episcopal Church is represented by Bishop Robert Gibson. The United Church of Christ is represented by David Colwell. The United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. is represented by Eugene Carson Blake. The representative

of the Evangelical United Brethren Church was not present for this meeting due to sickness, but he is Bishop Reuben H. Mueller.

Each church that is a part of the Consultation on Church Union will be represented by a delegation of nine members. Our delegates will consist of W. J. Jarman, chairman, George Beazley, executive secretary, Gaines M. Cook, A. Dale Fiers, J. Irwin Miller, Ronald Osborn, Lester Rickman, Harlie Smith, and Park Winkler. The characteristics of each delegation probably reflect the nature of that portion of the Body of Christ. Each, however, has some pastoral ministers, some administrative officers, and some professors.

The present agenda for the next meeting, to be held at Oberlin, Ohio, on March 19-21, 1963, includes Bible study, the reading of papers and reports of study groups designed to critically examine the papers in previous committee meetings, general discussion groups, and plenary sessions. Topics to be considered at the meeting are: "Scripture, Tradition and the Guardians of Tradition," "Phenomonological and Sociological Analysis of the Participating Denominations," and "The Worship and Witness of the Church." It seems probable that the papers and reports will be made public, though the sessions will be closed to the public press. This is being done, not to deny to anyone an understanding of what is going on, but simply because representatives of the denominations will be freer to express tentative opinions and enter into controversial material if they feel there is no chance of a statement appearing in print out of context. The press officers of the participating churches will be at all the sessions.

The problems of Christian unity with which the Consultation on Church Union will be wrestling are formidable enough to make the effort and cost of such interchange worthwhile but not so formidable as to make success improbable. No one can say where God's grace will lead us in this venture, but we may be sure that we shall find ourselves going out far beyond our expectations, if we submit ourselves in obedience to his Word. Nonetheless, to enter into the Consultation takes courage, for its chairman has often emphasized that unless we are deadly serious about this effort, we have no right to invest the personal and financial resources that will be necessary for this work.

I must confess that I was a bit troubled by the ease with which this extremely important resolution passed our Convention. Like most other executives whose agencies introduce resolutions, I am not anxious for bitter and acrimonious debate from the floor. Nonetheless, I also feel that a resolution passed with too little serious consideration may often arouse great expectations that later are disappointed and I should not want this to be the case in this crucial event in American church life. I realize, of course, that many factors affect what happens in our Assembly. The rushed schedule of business, and the well-known Disciple com-

mitment to discussions of plans for unity no doubt came into play, unless we meant that we are ready to seriously entertain a plan of union for these six fairly diverse portions of the Body of Christ, we should never have taken the first step.

I want to discuss now some of the problems which this Consultation will have to face and the general form of the church that might emerge from it. I want to make quite clear, however, that what I am saying here grows out of my study of the original sermon of Eugene Blake, out of the papers read by Theodore Wedel and John Dillenberger at the first meeting, out of the history and nature of the churches involved, and out of study of the Church of South India, which union has undoubtedly helped to suggest Blake's proposal, and not out of any inside information that has come to me from attending the Executive Committee meetings.

This can be best suggested by looking at the ancient and honorable basis of union set forth first in Chicago in 1886 and reaffirmed in England in 1888, known as the Lambeth Quadrilateral. Any Consultation on Church Union which involves the Protestant Episcopal Church will sooner or later bound to find itself dealing with this statement. It is called a Quadrilateral because it has four main points. As stated in the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, "the Articles were approved by the Lambeth Conference of 1888 as stating from the Anglican standpoint the essentials for a reunited Christian Church."

About the first of the articles there should be no disagreement among the present six participants, unless the Disciples should follow Alexander Campbell and make a sharp and rigid distinction between the two divisions of the Scriptures, and I doubt if any of us would want to draw the line as uncompromisingly as our forefathers did. The article reads: "The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as containing all things necessary to salvation, and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith." Since this is the one place where agreement seems complete, rather imagine that the Consultation will be thrown back upon the Scriptures again and again as the basic element in the consideration of problems that may be reflected in the other three articles. It is surely not without significance that the second meeting is to have time for daily Bible study and that one paper with its discussion is to hinge around "The Scripture, Tradition and the Guardians of Tradition."

The second article reads: "B. The Apostles' Creed, as the Baptismal Symbol; and the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient statement of the Christian Faith." Here, the question of whether this is test or testimony may become crucial. The United Church of Christ has taken the latter position in regard to its own Statement of Faith and presumably in regard to all other formulations in words, which attempt to set forth in frail human language what God has done for us through Jesus Christ. It is this emphasis on testimony that has encouraged the Disciples to undertake co-



versations with the United Church of Christ, but it is well-known that some of the representatives of other churches in this discussion are offended, or at least not thoroughly happy, with this distinction. Although, traditionally, Disciples have been anti-credal (and we must remember that even our friends assert that what we have is an unwritten creed), I find that a great many of our younger ministers would feel no hesitation in accepting this article, and many want some affirmation of faith that can be made corporately in worship, as long as the exact letter is not pressed.

While not prejudicing the issue nor necessarily shifting our ground, we must admit among ourselves that we and much of the rest of Christendom are in a position difficult to defend logically when we insist on the canon of the New Testament decided upon in the second, third and fourth centuries (the first mention of exactly our twenty-seven books, no more and no less, is in a festal Easter letter of Athanasius in A.D. 367 and neither of our two oldest codices of the New Testament have just these twenty-seven) and yet reject the statement of faith (the Apostles' Creed) and the office of the bishop that emerged out of the same matrix.

Personally, I should not object to the Apostles' Creed as a baptismal symbol, used as testimony, and I must confess that I find the repetition of it in worship far more satisfying than some modern statements of faith. Recently, my wife and I repeated it in an Episcopal service for the dead at the funeral of a very old and very dear friend. We both found value in saying with others, I believe "in the Resurrection of the body (understood in the Pauline sense) And the life everlasting" in the presence of our friend's casket. The "descended into hell" that offends so many moderns would not do so if they had the correct translation of the Greek *hadēs*.

The Nicene Creed is, to me, more difficult. Generally speaking, the Apostles' Creed retains the biblical language. The Nicene Creed somewhat presupposes the Greek metaphysics which seems no more permanent to me than our own is apt to be. Whatever the personal feelings of the author or the reader may be, there can be no question that this article points up some real problems that must be faced in the Consultation on Church Union, and we, who represent the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ), shall try faithfully to mirror not only our own personal reactions but those of our constituency.

The third article reads: "C. The two Sacraments ordained by Christ Himself—Baptism and the Supper of the Lord—ministered with unfailing use of Christ's Words of Institution, and of the elements ordained by Him." Stated in this way, there would seem to be little reason for disagreement among the participants at this point. The experience of those seeking to form a united Church of North India, however, indicates that three problems are apt to arise. In baptism the age of the subject and

the use of sprinkling, pouring and/or immersion will certainly come under discussion. The invitation to the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) has raised an issue for the Consultation on Church Union that was not present when only the original four participants were included. We must honor the courage of their representatives, who were willing to face this stiff problem in the ecumenical discussion in order to enable us to participate.

Another problem, about which I had not pondered deeply, emerged from the discussions in North India. This was the contents of the cup. Though the contents of the cup is an inference from the accounts just as the amount of water in baptism, there can be as little doubt that the church of the first century normally used fermented wine as that it normally used immersion. For the Methodists engaged in discussion looking toward a Church of North India the use of fermented wine was as difficult a problem as the use of some other method than immersion would be for our people. One wonders how New Testament the Disciples would be at this point. Would they contend for New Testament practice here as well as in baptism, or not? This article, too, is one which dramatizes some of the problems to be faced.

The last article reads: "D. The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the Unity of His Church." It is obvious, of course, that only three of the participants have an episcopate and that two of these would not be recognized by the other as "historic," if that phrase is intended to indicate what is usually known as apostolic succession. The paper of Theodore Wedel, read at the first meeting of the Consultation (our readers can find the text used in *The Ecumenical Review*, Volume IV, No. 4, pp. 345-354) gives hope that this issue is not a closed one, but it is difficult to know if his view is truly representative of his church without having been present at the discussion. Certainly this became a major issue in the formation of the Church of South India, and the relationship of the Anglican Church to their final solution is not clear nor indeed the solution itself. Here, union took place in obedience to Christ with some issues not solved, just as it did between the Christians and the Disciples in 1832 and as it has in the formation of the United Church of Christ.

What kind of church is apt to emerge from the Consultation on Church Union, supposing that it is able to avoid the rocks on which the Greenwich Plan foundered. First of all, it is apt to be a church consisting mainly of middle class and upper middle class Americans. None of the churches now included has a stronghold on the lower levels of American society, though some include the upper and upper middle classes in their constituency. Secondly, it will be a church with a strongly Protestant cast (if members count for anything) with a strongly catholic use of the

sacraments in worship. (Disciples, despite their traditional prejudices, should feel at home in this type of atmosphere with their emphasis on both Scripture and the Lord's Supper in worship.) That it would include little or no influence from what has been called the Third Force in Christendom, the group Lesslie Newbigin calls the Pentecostals, is regrettable, but perhaps at this stage inevitable. Thirdly, it would be a church that was truly national in the sense that it covered the whole of the United States. I should guess that no town of county seat size would be without one or more congregations of one of its constituent members. Fourthly, it should be a church revitalized by a tremendous triumph over Satan and fructified by the variety of Christian understandings which it had incorporated. Finally, it would be a more adequate witness to a Savior who is a reconciler and whose Body is one and incarnate.

Can these things be? Is a church possible with such thorny problems before the Consultation? Certainly not—if it is a negotiation between churches that have become enamored of their own existence. But yes—if the constituent churches are really ready to become radically obedient to the one Lord who would make them one in Him and who called his Church into existence.

# DISCIPLE CONCEPTS OF THE MINISTRY IN THE ECUMENICAL DIALOGUE

JOHN CABELL CHENAULT

*Minister, First Christian Church  
Frankfort, Kentucky*

The most stubborn difficulty standing in the way of a united Christendom today is the controversy over the different concepts of the nature and the authority of the ministry held by churches involved in the ecumenical movement. This difficulty has been called the Gordian knot in the conferences on Christian unity, so inextricably difficult that it must be cut by bold and unusual measures. Such bold action has been taken by the churches of South India and Ceylon, and such measures as were used to cut the knot in Ceylon have been proposed to four major Protestant bodies in America by Eugene Carson Blake in his now famous and dramatic sermon.

The problem of the ministry in unity discussions centers primarily around the claims and requirements of the Anglican Churches regarding the episcopate. John M. Krumn, in his book, *Modern Heresies*, expresses the tenacious point of view of the Anglican and Episcopal Churches when he writes: "Anglicanism is the providence of God . . . has retained this Catholic arrangement of the ministry and believes that no proposals for Christian reunion can succeed which do not include it in its essentials. . . . Anglicans may not be able to commend the historic episcopate to the rest of Protestant Christianity, but they are duty-bound to insist that until the question of recognized authority in the ministry is faced and resolved organic reunion is an impossibility."<sup>1</sup>

So eminent a New Testament scholar as John Knox, in his Hoover Lectures at the University of Chicago, after tracing the development of the concept of the ministry in the New Testament, said to us: "I must say that when I am thinking seriously and with some attempt at realism, I simply cannot conceive of the union of Christendom except on the grounds of a polity which, while not failing to embody the invaluable contributions of groups with a presbyterial or congregational tradition, yet involves the full acceptance of the historic episcopate . . . Certainly it seems most unlikely that the historic episcopate should be given up by those who have it—much more unlikely than that other groups should find it acceptable."<sup>2</sup>

Since order and authority in the ministry is the highest hurdle to the attainment of the goal of Christian unity, it is imperative, if we intend to remain relevant in our approach to this goal, that we set ourselves to the task of untying the Gordian knot.

This paper shall attempt first, to define the development and under-



stand the claims of episcopacy; second, to trace our thought as Disciples of Christ in our developing concept of the ministry, with particular reference to episcopal and presbyterial concepts; third, to sample some of the contemporary opinions of Disciple leaders with reference to the problem of ministry in union proposals; and finally, to point to the contribution which Disciples may make to the solution of the problem of a universally accepted ministry.

## I

### *The Development of Episcopacy*

The origin of episcopacy is uncertain as to the date and manner of development. There are Roman Catholic and Anglican scholars who hold that there is an unbroken line of succession by the laying on of hands, substantiated by New Testament records and the earliest traditions of post-biblical literature, which runs from Jesus through the original apostles until now.

More modest claims are made for episcopacy by other leaders of the Anglican tradition, who admit that the sources are ambiguous. But, according to these more modest advocates, episcopacy emerged within a generation of the end of the New Testament period, and thus comes down to us with the weight of nineteen hundred years of history.

The first source regularly cited for the early development of the historic episcopate after the apostles is Clement of Rome in a letter to Corinth about the year 95. Martin Marty's *A Short History of Christianity* says, "His [Clement's] letter has a definite Pauline cast; in making episcopal claims it does not distinguish between bishops and elders; but its very existence and character make clear the implication that Clement as head of the Roman Church should have something to offer in a churchly quarrel elsewhere."<sup>3</sup> Clement is listed by Irenaeus as successor to Anacletus who succeeded Linus who succeeded Peter to the bishop's chair in Rome. Although space does not permit the elaboration of their contributions, Ignatius of Antioch, Hegesippus, Victor of Rome, Tertullian and Cyprian all contribute glimpses to our knowledge of the development of the episcopate with its three-fold division of the ministry into bishop, priest, and deacon.

Robert S. Bilheimer, in *The Quest for Christian Unity*, compares the difference between the three concepts of ministry. Those who advocate the episcopal concept of the ministry stress two points: "the passing of succession through the laying on of hands to those ordained, and the continuous existence of bishops as guardians of the faith and pastors of ministers."<sup>4</sup> Those who belong to the presbyterial order see the presbytery, rather than bishops, as "the vehicle through which the apostolic succession is handed down." Adherents of congregational polity regard the

apostolic succession as being carried through the centuries by the faithful congregation which witnesses to the Word of God. Ordination thus belongs to the bishops in the first instance, to the presbytery in the second, and to the congregation in the last.

All three of the aforementioned traditions individually have claimed New Testament origin and sanction for themselves, while denying the same to the others. But the most informed scholars today assert that the roots of all three systems are discernible in the New Testament, even though no one of them is fully developed and clearly presented as holding precedence over the other two. It is to be hoped that all parties shall make less dogmatic claims in the future, for a united Church cannot exist without a common ministry mutually and universally recognized by all who share in the union.

## II

### *The Disciple Concept of The Ministry*

Before attempting to state and evaluate Disciple contributions to the ecumenical conversations regarding the problem of ministry, we need to understand our own historic point of view, especially as our conceptions are related to the presbyterial and episcopal concepts.

Of course, the most elementary study of our history reveals that our movement began as a protest against ecclesiasticism and clericalism. Both Thomas Campbell and Barton Stone had unhappy and disturbing experiences with their presbyteries; Campbell over "open communion" and Stone over the Presbyterian Confession of Faith as it related to theological integrity and personal freedom. Their experiences caused them in the early development of the movement to look askance at even the simplest expressions of ecclesiasticism such as conventions, associations, councils, or any organization beyond the local church. They blamed the disunity of the churches on clericalism.

Alexander Campbell was scathing in his criticism of a "hireling clergy." He ridiculed men who would preach for pay, and in the very first issue of *The Christian Baptist*, he expounded against "the arrogance of the clergy."

This attitude prevailed generally among our churches in their attempt at the "restoration of the ancient order of things." They accepted the view that the only organization known in the church during the New Testament period was the local congregation. The view persisted that these local congregations should be presided over by a plurality of elders, and that the preacher was no more than an elder who should derive his living from a secular occupation. Ordination was at first considered unnecessary, smacking too much of ecclesiasticism. Campbell was also opposed to the idea of a special call to the ministry, holding that the clergy obtained dominion over the church by "pretense of divine calling."

Stone had a higher concept of the ministry than Campbell at the time of the union of their two groups. While he had repudiated synods and presbyteries, he had nevertheless held to an orderly concept of ordination. Campbell, too, was soon to take back much that he had said. As the churches multiplied and the cause grew, he realized that the movement could not go far without a more ordered ministry. In little more than a decade he writes in *The Millennial Harbinger* trying to undergird the cause of Bethany College: "I know not how to express my surprise that the churches seem to take so little interest in raising up well qualified young men to plead the cause of Bible Christianity. . . . If our brethren would do as much as they are now doing in the field of benevolence, we would in five years have some thousand well furnished evangelists in the field, and persons well qualified for the oversight of churches."<sup>5</sup> His writings in *The Millennial Harbinger* also reveal a changed attitude toward ministerial support and ordination.

In its defense of congregational independence and its opposition to hierarchy, our brotherhood has tended to minimize the importance of the Jerusalem Council recorded in Acts 15, which has been used by presbyterial and episcopal bodies to prove New Testament precedent for those forms of church government. However, Campbell himself eventually recognized that bishops were in the New Testament and came to exert influence beyond local congregations. Writing on "The Nature of Christian Organization" in *The Millennial Harbinger* in 1843, he said, "Christianity, introduced by the Lord in person, by Apostles, Evangelists and prophets, was, as has often been demonstrated, placed under the supervision of elders or bishops. These bishops, though raised up and ordained by certain churches, possessed in some way a supervision over cities and districts of country beyond a single congregation. Bishops were ordained in every city as soon as congregations were formed, and these bishops by consultation, either by way of occasional or periodic meetings, or by internuncios, messengers, or epistles, consulted, advised, and directed the whole community of Christians in reference to all matters of public interest in the kingdom."<sup>6</sup>

Barton Stone had maintained all along that conferences of "bishops and elders should examine ministers who were accused of false doctrine and should protect the church against unworthy ministers. Furthermore, in contrast to Campbell, he had drawn a distinction between elders who were "ordained ministers" and the "unordained preachers."

Although a strong element of opinion, or should we say prejudice, about clericalism and absolute congregational independence, continues to the present day, our brotherhood has gradually moved both toward a "higher" concept of the ministry and to a more progressive and efficient concept of church organization. No longer bound by biblical literalism, we have followed a course of expediency very similar to the one which,



we may believe, caused the church of New Testament times to develop as it did in meeting new problems and needs of the first and second centuries.

In the matter of ministry, our trends are little different from those of the other established denominations around us now. Our standards of education, ethics, and ordination are being raised continually. Our ministers, at home in the ecumenical atmosphere since the turn of the century, can be expected to raise a voice which is heard with increasing respect by other communions, especially as we abandon our traditional prejudice against theology, reconsider our too-simple answers and homespun slogans, and bring to the ecumenical dialogue more informed views on the questions relating to the nature of the Church, the ministry, the sacraments and other matters of faith and order.

### III

#### *Contemporary Thought Among Disciples Regarding The Problem of Ministry*

At the beginning of the paper, we stated the insistence of followers of the Anglican tradition that episcopacy would have to be included as one of the essentials in any workable plan of organic union of the churches. Eugene Carson Blake, in his aforementioned sermon, recognizing that the catholic principle of visible historic continuity contained in the episcopate was "the only basis on which a broad reunion can take place," made a proposal to create "a ministry which by its orders and ordination" would be recognized as widely as possible by all the Christian bodies. Said he, "... I propose that, without adopting any particular theory of historic succession, the reunited church shall provide at its inception for the consecration of all its bishops by bishops and presbyters both in the apostolic succession and out of it from all over the world from all Christian Churches which would authorize or permit them to take part."

"I propose further," he continued, "that the whole ministry of the uniting churches would then be unified at solemn services at which the bishops and representative ministers from each church, would, in humble dependence upon God, act and pray that the Holy Spirit would supply to all and through all what each has to contribute and whatever each may need of the fullness of Christ's grace, commission and authority for the exercise of a new larger ministry in this wider visible manifestation of Christ's Holy and Catholic Church."<sup>7</sup>

Blake's plan has been quoted at length for two reasons: First, it closely resembles the procedure used in the unification of the ministry in the union plans of South India and Ceylon, which, along with the similar approach of the churches of North India and Pakistan, are the only plans



of union which seem to meet the episcopal requirements thus far. The second reason is that we Disciples were chagrined at not having been included in Blake's original plan with the Episcopal, the United Presbyterian, the Methodist, and the United Church of Christ churches. Did this disappointment indicate that we were ready to give up the requirement of immersion as a test of fellowship? This is one important question. Another question, more relevant to the present study, is this: Did our impatience, at having been left out, mean that we were ready to embrace Blake's new ordination?

Long before Blake's sermon, Charles Clayton Morrison, in his book, *The Unfinished Reformation*, gave an answer which relates to the latter question: "Obviously there can be no real union, if the ministry of a part of the church is unacceptable to other parts of the church." Morrison then declared that the problem relating to episcopacy must not be oversimplified. We must understand the peculiar predicament of those churches which have the "unique possession of something they cannot let go." Continued Morrison, "The conception is deeply rooted that the Anglican communion has been entrusted by historical circumstances with an institution which belongs to the unity of the Christian Church, and that it must guard this treasure until the rest of the church is willing to receive it." This highly respected Disciples editor held that "it is too much to expect of human nature that they [the Anglicans and Episcopalians] will voluntarily relinquish the dignity with which it invests their status."<sup>8</sup>

As to the attitude of nonepiscopal denominations to the historic episcopate, Morrison wrote: "Some regard it with suspicion as the carrier of sacerdotal principle, than which nothing is more repugnant to Protestantism as a whole. Others, taking counsel of Anglican history and contemporary character and practice, believe that the historic episcopate could be maintained in a united church without the danger of sacerdotalism . . . . Still other nonepiscopalians assume an attitude of indifference with respect to the importance of the historic episcopate. They do not see wherein the effectiveness of the ministry would be enhanced or the spiritual life of the church enriched by a ministry ordained in this venerable succession. On the other hand, they are unable to point out wherein any vital principle of Christian faith or practice would be compromised by its adoption. This third class probably represents the largest body of feeling in the nonepiscopal churches."

Then Morrison goes on to point out that each of the other denominations "has a neat little historic episcopate of its own! True, their histories do not go back as far as that of the Anglican communion, but they go back to the beginning of each denomination . . . . Virtually all our ministers are ordained in the succession of ministers . . ." He also noted that the objection of ordination by bishops should be put in proper perspec-

tive. The difference at this point between episcopal ordination and that of the presbyterian and congregational churches may be real but greatly exaggerated. Other denominations call their bishops 'supervisors' or 'superintendents' or even 'secretaries.'

Although Dr. Morrison, at this point, seemed ready to embrace episcopal ordination, he appealed rather to the imperative to consider, not indifferently, but positively and wholeheartily and with open mind, the episcopate's claims as we seek to provide a ministry for the whole church.

A good summary statement of Morrison's conclusion follows: "If Protestantism cannot ask Anglicanism to surrender the historic episcopate, neither can Anglicanism ask Protestant ministries to accept reordination. Conscience is involved on both sides. Some way must be found by which episcopacy may be shared with the whole church without either reordination or the impairment of the historic succession."

While Dr. Morrison wrote of the general reaction of all nonepiscopal ministries, what would be the attitude of Disciple ministers? I suspect that many of the more liberal men of our brotherhood would fall in the group who are indifferent toward episcopacy, but who are willing to accept wholesale reordination without any feeling of its efficacy or any sense of compromise if that expedient action would bring about a reunion of a large segment of Christendom. But such an attitude will surely fail of success, for mere expediency and indifferent acceptance cannot unite us in Christ.

The leading British Disciple theologian, William Robinson, a keen student and participant in the ecumenical movement, admitting that a serious lack of concern about questions of structure is a definite weakness in Protestantism, says that the Protestant seems to the Catholic to have no more than a sentimental interest in unity. Asserts Robinson, "Protestantism does need to recover the sense of the apostolicity of the church and of the reality of apostolic authority in the primitive church."<sup>9</sup> Robinson proceeds to examine the claim for apostolicity through episcopal succession and concludes "that the real difficulty in accepting the rigid theory of apostolic succession, from the Protestant side, is not indifference to forms. It is something much deeper. If God is personal, and if he has chosen to deal personally with his children, being the father of his family, it ill becomes us to attempt to hedge him in with legal restrictions, which would seem to be foreign to the way of his dealing with his children."<sup>10</sup> Robinson calls us, however, to understand that the Catholic concern for form and structure in the church is not dictated "by his love for exclusiveness nor by a mere antiquarianism." He believes that a solution will come for our difficulty from a realistic study of the Bible and by coming to understand each other at deeper levels.

Surely one of the most important influences in our thought about the ministry today is the newer insight of biblical scholarship concerning the

organization of the church in New Testament times. Contemporary New Testament studies have cut the ground out from under our original pre-suppositions as a brotherhood, viz., that the only form of church organization to be found in the primitive church was congregational independence. Dwight E. Stevenson, in a paper read before the Panel of Scholars in 1959 entitled "Church Organization in the New Testament and Among the Disciples of Christ,"<sup>11</sup> cites this error in the thought of Campbell and other Disciple fathers. He shows that, according to New Testament interpretation today, there was no set form of organization divinely revealed. In actuality all three forms of church structure which were later to develop were there in embryonic form—episcopal, presbyterial and congregational. As this truth begins to sift down to our congregations, since the New Testament has always been our norm, this new and evolving conception of the church and the ministry is sure to bring, if not revolutionary, at least an accelerated development in our growing concept of the ministry and the church.

Two other influences are destined to bring about changes in our present concepts of the ministry. One is the move toward restructure of the brotherhood. The time is ripe for a study such as the one in process with Dale Fiers as chairman. It is to be fervently hoped, however, that the minister, who, in the early days of our brotherhood life, was a faithful and respected preacher of the Gospel and shepherd of the flock, but who in recent years has often become an administrator and community chore boy, shall not be pressed more and more into the mold of "the Organization Man." It is inevitable, however, that we shall develop toward some kind of connectionalism, perhaps like presbyterianism, which shall replace our extreme emphasis on the independence of each local church.

The other influence which is expected to make a change in present Disciple views of the ministry is coupled with more recent concepts of New Testament scholarship. It is our gradual recognition of the importance of tradition. Not even our fathers could tunnel under 1900 years of history all the way back to the time of Christ. They insisted that we were a Bible people, who accept nothing later than the New Testament. But what they did not recognize was that in taking the New Testament as their guide of faith and practice, they accepted a canon of the Scriptures which owed its existence to the same period which developed the episcopacy and the historic creeds. Like other restorationists groups, we had tended to accept the Bible and to reject tradition of the post-apostolic age, thus losing a sense of the total sweep of church history. The time has come when we must see ourselves more fully related to the continuity of Christian history. To do so will cause us to rethink our concept of the church and of the ministry.

Lest we should leave the impression that Disciple ministers are all



ready to accept episcopal orders, it should be stated that perhaps many men at the present time would say, "Nobody's going to lay a hand on me." Others would say, "Let us not be stampeded into any kind of an organic union which requires reordination." A sampling of opinion which I have conducted in the last six months has yet to find a single Disciple preacher who is enthusiastic about the prospect of success of Blake's proposal for gaining a universally acceptable ministry in the ecumenical movement. Nevertheless, I have found in the poll of our ministry that we still want to be included in The Consultation on Church Union.

#### IV

##### *The Contribution Of The Disciples of Christ To An Ecumenical Concept of The Ministry*

What contribution do we Disciples have to make to the concept of the ministry for a united church? First, the author believes that we have given an example of responsible development from very simple concepts of the ministry in the frontier setting where we originated to a ministry fully respected and able to fulfill its role in a technological age. In a sense we have recapitulated the *process*, at least, by which the primitive church of the first centuries developed its own ministry. That process, as Dwight E. Stevenson showed in his paper on church organization previously cited, was based on the principle of expediency. Emerging situations and needs have motivated the process as we have sought to make our ministry relevant to each succeeding age. The present Vatican Council in Rome is recognizing, we believe, as all churches which hope to make any real impact on the secular order must recognize, that it must make continual adjustments of theology and structure—especially of its ministry—if it is to be relevant to the times. Disciple history is not so long but that this example of orderly development can serve to show the churches of a more rigid structure the possibilities of a developing ministry.

Next, our lack of rigid system and our flexibility are genuine assets in the ecumenical encounter. Emergence, variety, and vitality have characterized the Disciple ministry. At each new stage of development we have sought to relate ourselves to that which is elemental in the Gospel and to be guided by the living spirit of him who "came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life . . ." We can greatly assist in the quest of a ministry for the whole church if we continue our insistence on a return to the New Testament fellowship and the fundamental principles of Christianity. This is not to rule out the tradition of the ancient church, but is rather a recognition that the New Testament is still basic to all Christians, and it permits and fosters flexibility and freedom, variety and vitality.



Third, the emphasis which our church has given to the ministry of the laity is one which is pertinent today. It was a true insight which led our fathers to deny the wide separation between laity and clergy which existed in much of Christendom at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Today even "high church" groups such as the Anglicans, and, according to reports from the Vatican Council, the Roman Catholics as well are beginning to set themselves to the task of relating the laity to the church in a more organic way. The mechanical separation, which the episcopacy created, cannot exist in a united church. Meantime, there is not enough place for laymen in the developing structure of our own organizational life, as Dr. Stephen J. England told us at our Des Moines Convention. We have other laymen of the calibre of J. Irwin Miller, president of The National Council of Churches, who must not be overlooked in our future development. Stating that our laymen would attend conventions and other policy making meetings of our brotherhood if they felt a part of the proceedings, Dr. England said rightly: ". . . The business of the church is too important to be turned over to the preachers." The only way we can maintain this position in ecumenical conclaves, however, is to involve our own laymen more widely in the church's mission.

Finally, a large corps of ministers of our church from Thomas and Alexander Campbell and Barton Stone to the present time have had a passion for unity. We, as ministers, must continue to believe that in losing our lives, as individuals and as a brotherhood, we shall find our lives. "He must increase, [we] must decrease." Regarding all our cherished traditions of a century and a half, the will of Christ must prevail. Perish all if he be glorified!

We are blessed as ministers with the example of the irenic spirit of Barton W. Stone and the indefatigable passion of Alexander Campbell in our quest for Christian unity. Louis Cochran, speaking on "The Legacy of A Free Mind," said of the latter as he spurred us on to our shining goal as a brotherhood:

"If Alexander Campbell were alive today, I am sure he would recognize his fellow-Christians in every brotherhood or denomination, and in every country and in every race under the sun, and that he would still give his heart 'to him that loveth most.' . . . I think Alexander Campbell would take a long, long view of this whole ecumenical movement. . . . Where is it leading us? To a United Church, we hope. But the way is not yet clear. I am sure Campbell would have difficulty in accepting the Lord's Supper only from the hands of a priest in the apostolic succession; I think he would stumble over the reception of baptized infants. But hurdles are created to be hurdled. And eventually, in the Lord's good time, if our minds remain free in the tradition of Alexander Campbell's great legacy to us, and our hearts loving and true, we shall all yet

enter into full fellowship in a church which is not 'our church' but in truth and in fact, as stated by Thomas Campbell in that immortal Declaration of Independence from spiritual bondage, the "Declaration and Address," will be the United Church of Christ upon earth, "essentially, intentionally and constitutionally one."<sup>12</sup> So long as our ministers cultivate the spirit of unity of Stone and the consuming passion for unity of Campbell, we shall remain in the vanguard of the ecumenical movement until the Church of Christ is one.

## FOOTNOTES

1. John M. Krumm, *Modern Heresies* (Greenwich, Conn.: Seabury Press, 1961) p. 156.
2. John Knox, *The Early Church and The Coming Great Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1955) p. 142.
3. Martin E. Marty, *A Short History of Christianity* (New York: Meridian Books Inc., 1959) p. 76.
4. Robert S. Bilheimer, *The Quest for Christian Unity* (New York: Association Press, 1952) p. 164 f.
5. Alexander Campbell, *The Millennial Harbinger*, Volume VII (May, 1843) p. 217.
6. Alexander Campbell, "The Nature of the Christian Organization," *The Millennial Harbinger*, Volume V (January, 1842) p. 60.
7. Eugene Carson Blake, "A Proposal Toward the Reunion of Christ's Church," *The Christian Century*, Volume LXXVII, 5 (December 21, 1960) p. 1509.
8. Charles Clayton Morrison, *The Unfinished Reformation* (New York: Harper Bros., 1953) p. 160 f.
9. William Robinson, *The Biblical Doctrine of the Church* (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1955) p. 184.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 210.
11. Dwight E. Stevenson, "Church Organization in the New Testament and Among the Disciples of Christ," *The College of the Bible Quarterly*, XXXVI, 2 (April, 1959) p. 18 f.
12. Louis Cochran, "The Legacy of a Free Mind," *The College of the Bible Quarterly*, XXXVI, 1 (January, 1959) pp. 43-44.

# THE BIBLE AND THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT— FRIENDS OR FOES

WILLIAM L. REED

*Professor of Old Testament, The College of the Bible  
Lexington, Kentucky*

Although the Bible has sometimes been misused in such a way as to make it the foe of man's longing for Christian unity and the friend of sectarian divisions, it is being rediscovered in modern times as a moving force in the ecumenical movement. When people turn to the Bible with a prayer in their hearts for the healing of the wounds in the body of Christ, they often find that it provides some incentive and guidance in the quest for the spirit and structure of brotherhood among the churches and the nations.

The Bible as the friend of the ecumenical movement is not merely a hope and a strategy of ecclesiastical leaders; it is also the framework within which many Biblical scholars now engage in a study of the Scriptures. For example, modern studies of the Old Testament place a new emphasis upon the element of theological universalism which is expressed at many points in Israel's history. The concepts of election and the chosen people are no longer to be viewed as doctrines designed to build walls of separation among peoples; on the contrary, the call of God to ancient Israel was a call to an increasing service to the nations.

In a sense, each period of Israel's history witnessed its own response to God's call for brotherhood among God's children, but there is a kind of climax of Old Testament theology in the vision of all nations turning to the worship of the one true God. Such a vision came to the Psalmist who was, in his own way, concerned about the ecumenical impulse in his own time:

God reigns over the nations;  
God sits on his holy throne.  
The princes of the peoples gather  
as the people of the God of Abraham. (47:8-9)

What was sometimes a faint hope in the Old Testament became a distinctive emphasis in the New Testament. As the early church moved from its Palestinian setting into the great metropolitan centers of the Mediterranean world, its leaders properly sensed the unifying effect of the Gospel. Part of Paul's greatness lay in his ability to make vocal the aspiration for a kind of fellowship that might escape the confinements of sectarian religion:

But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a custodian; for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on

Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:25-29)

A study of the implications of Scriptural references like these can lead to the conclusion that modern efforts to use the Bible as a tool of the ecumenical movement are not only desirable but are actually in keeping with the teachings of the Bible.

However, since the Bible continues to be used as an instrument of sectarianism, and since there is still much to be learned about the proper use of Scripture in discussions of Christian unity, many questions persist. Is the Bible properly thought of as a tool or instrument? Is it a servant to be used, or is it in some sense a master to be obeyed? Is it possible or desirable to consider the Bible to be inspired, and at the same time, to put it into the service of ecclesiastical organizations which are less than inspired, to say the least?

As a study of the modern use of the Bible seems to indicate, there is a danger that whenever the Bible is relegated to a role of secondary importance in the thinking of people, it has tended to lose all authority over their lives. Although a literalistic approach to Scripture no longer commends itself to those who are concerned about the implications of Christ's life and teachings for genuine brotherhood, it does have the merit of taking the Bible seriously. The doctrine of verbal inspiration of Scripture, although it seems foreign to the Scripture itself, was and still continues to be, a warning to those who would make the Bible merely a means to an end, rather than one of God's gifts, precious in its own right.

There is a danger in speaking of the Bible as if it were the friend of the ecumenical movement, and nothing more. One commentator who has a genuine concern for a proper use of Scripture in ecumenical discussions has observed: "It is one of the spiritual tragedies of our times that in taking the historical and literary dimensions of the Bible, we have neglected it as the book of life. We need now to spend less time in measuring the Bible, and more time in allowing the Bible to measure us."

There is a sense in which the Bible ought to be the master of every movement which seeks to be thoroughly Christian. The current interest in Biblical theology is itself testimony to the fact that many Christians who were once content to study the Bible as a historical record, or for its literary qualities, are now eagerly studying it as containing the revealed will of God. The languages of psychology, philosophy and sociology are important to all modern efforts to describe the faith of the peoples and the writers of the Bible. But the language of the Bible itself, with its meaningful use of terms like redemption, revelation, sin, love and grace, continues to provide a means of communication where scientific terminology is not completely adequate. Unless the modern reader



of the Bible can comprehend some authoritative quality about the language of the Bible, he is not liable to accept the Bible as the friend of the ecumenical movement, or of any other.

It is said that on one occasion Mark Twain sought to borrow a book from one of his neighbors. "You'll have to read it here," said the neighbor. "I make it a rule never to let any book go out of my library." The next day the neighbor asked for the use of Mark Twain's lawn-mower. "Sure thing," agreed the humorist. "But you'll have to use it on my lawn. I make the same rules you do."

In our study of the Bible there is always a temptation to make our own rules. It is easy to make the Bible say what we should like to have it say. One wonders how much such a spirit has entered into the thinking of those who have concluded that it is misleading and divisive to accord the Bible too high a degree of authority. Conversely, it often appears to be a fact that those who have exalted the Bible as God's supreme revelation have done so because its teachings and the gospel of which it speaks ought to be, even if they are not, of supreme concern to the church and the world.

There is obviously some element of danger when the Bible is accorded a place of secondary importance, as if the church's tradition about it, or even scholarly opinion, must take precedence. One might compare an approach to the Bible, which holds that it is in no way authoritative, to a possible use of a city telephone directory. Suppose that one opened the directory with the feeling that he knew more about telephone numbers than could possibly be found on an inanimate page. Perhaps his confidence has been shaken because he has dialed a few wrong numbers in his time. He now looks up the number of John Jones, but he decides that he knows just as good a number as that which appears opposite the name.

If one approaches the telephone directory with the feeling that he is the master of it, and if he is not willing to grant it a degree of authority, one would soon be in trouble. Although that analogy obviously cannot be carried too far, it may suggest something with regard to the use of the Bible. Unless one is willing to accord it an authoritative character, he can twist it to his own purposes, or render it equally useless by ignoring its witness to the history of God's redemptive purpose.

In an effort to describe the quality of modern English poetry and poets, John Masefield once observed: "The English poets are not remote; they mingle with the crowd. They are not masters of men's brains, but companions of their hearts."

There is a sense in which the Bible has been the master of men's brains as well as the companion of their hearts. Anyone who knew the late H. Richard Niebuhr personally, or has read his books dealing with revelation, the kingdom of God and the implications of radical monotheism could not miss the evidences of his intense desire to use the Bible as

if it were in some measure his master and his companion. The modern theologian or philosopher ought to be entirely free to formulate his own theology and his own philosophy. But the church continues to have need of both theologians and philosophers, who have so disciplined themselves in the written heritage of the Judeo-Christian faith as represented in the Bible, that they can be trusted as good interpreters of Scripture.

It is no accident that so many leaders of the ecumenical movement, ministers as well as administrators, have expressed an eagerness for a reappraisal of the Bible as an authoritative book. Many could be quoted on this point, but consider the following observation by Dr. John A. Mackay who has often addressed himself to this question of the relationship of the Bible to the concerns of Christian brotherhood and unity. "There is but one source where an authoritative understanding of the meaning and future of the Christian Church can be obtained. That source is the Bible, which is the record of God's self-disclosure for the redemption of mankind . . . This means that all who would understand the Church and shape her future must become Biblically minded and seek in the Biblical records the clue to the Church's meaning and the goal of the Church's destiny."

Such a spirit will always find that in the Bible which is friendly toward the ecumenical movement. The results of Bible study engaged in with such a frame of reference have had a large part in the successful achievements of the World Council of Churches and other world-wide ventures in ecumenicity.

But a word of warning may still be appropriate. Modern efforts to make the Bible master of the church and authoritative in a real sense can all too easily result in the acceptance of the Bible as a kind of tyrant. All too often Protestantism has been guilty of a barren Biblicism! Historically many who rejected the Pope in Rome set up for themselves instead the Bible as a kind of pope, to be worshiped as an infallible blueprint.

The alarm which Charles Clayton Morrison sounded so often and with such effectiveness needs to be sounded in each generation. Said he: "The Bible is not the source of our faith, or the ground of it, or the proof of it. Christ alone is the source, ground and the proof of our faith, of our devotion and of our understanding of Christ, not a substitute for it."

Such a statement was not intended as any disparagement of sacred Scripture. On the contrary, it points the way by which modern man can use the Bible with authority and at the same time permit it to speak of God's love and Christ's labors that all men might be brothers. It is of more than passing interest that the current Vatican Council in Rome is beginning to be involved in the problem of Biblical authority in much the same way as were the early world conferences of Protestantism. It is

to be hoped, and even expected, that the decisions from Rome will give some guidance as to the ways in which the Bible may be considered authoritative and at the same time open to private interpretation.

In any case, it is to be hoped that the time is past when denominational leaders will look upon the Bible as a cause of division among Christian groups. The Bible, like the Sabbath of which Jesus spoke, was made for man. Whenever the Bible is used as if it were a law code designed to divide or to enslave men's thoughts, rather than to serve their needs, then the Bible is being employed as its writers did not intend it to be. Although each book in the Bible has its own distinctive purpose, there is no doubt that many of them were written by devout men who had experienced God's love to the extent that they wished to share it with their communities. They must have felt, as did the reformers in the days of Josiah and Jeremiah, that a new quality of unity could be achieved by giving attention to the written word.

Philips Brooks used to say that the Bible is like a telescope. If a man looks *through* his telescope, then he sees worlds beyond; but if he looks *at* his telescope, he sees only a telescope. "The Bible is a thing which is beyond; but most people only look at it; and so they see only the dead letter." When one gropes for his own understanding of the nature of the church, or of the meaning of redemption, he needs all the help he can get. When he turns to Scripture for assistance, he is availing himself of resources which are almost limitless because of the centuries of history which they reflect and the profound experiences of faith of which the Bible is the expression.

Whether or not the Bible *is* the Word of God or merely *contains* the Word of God is an academic matter, suitable for debate and discussion only. Unless the reader finds that somehow his study of the Bible results in a new sense of his own commitment to God's purpose and in a greater urge to incorporate the Bible's lofty insight into the world-wide mission of the church, then it matters little what terms he uses to describe the outside of the Bible.

What structure the ecumenical movement of the future will take none can foresee, for the simple reason that it will take whatever form people will give it who care enough to make their faith incarnate in the common life. But one can predict that it will be the kind of structure which will give genuine meaning and purpose to the eternal need of men for unity with their brothers under the mercy of the one true God who called all men unto himself. The Bible is not the only source, but is an important one which can guide, as a friend of the forces of unity, each effort to incorporate into one family all the followers of Christ.

## FROM OUR PRESIDENT . . .

Dear Christian Friends,

We are happy to welcome Paul Crow as our new Editor of *THE SCROLL*. We look forward to a continuation of the many fine things already gleaned in this little scholarly effort of such fine traditions.

One of the evidences of progress is that we are forever rid of that terrible phrase, "Two Iron Men." It has been changed now to, "Three Iron Men." How is that for progress? It is due to the higher quality of our effort, the Democratic Administration, plus the fact that we got tired of seeing the phrase, "The Two Iron Men."

Our International Convention in Miami will bring us all nearer to radical Cuba. The Campbell Institute, at the sessions after the evening sessions of the Convention, will feature some of the liberal ideas of our Brotherhood's Panel of Scholars. I promise plenty of time for questions from the floor for either attack, agreement (?), or just plain orneriness.

I hope to see you in Miami.

BILL JOLLY



## FROM OUR TREASURER . . .

Fiscal Greetings!

Your address label will indicate (with the exception of libraries) the latest year for which you have paid dues. All individual dues run from October 1 through September 30, and are \$3.00 per year, for regular membership, and \$1.00 per year for currently-enrolled seminary students. Our new and eager Editor wants this issue to go to some of the highly-delinquent (financial, not moral) former members—in hopes that some might recant. Back dues are forgiven; you are welcome to the fold.

ROBERT D. CHAMBLESS



THE SCROLL is the journal of the Campbell Institute, an association of ministers and laymen of the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) founded in 1896. Its purpose is three-fold: (1) to encourage a scholarly spirit in the free discussion of vital problems, (2) to promote a more relevant commitment among the churches, and (3) to encourage publications of permanent value to the literature and thought of the Disciples of Christ.

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THEOLOGY, RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, AND  
THE DISCIPLES

JOHN R. SCUDDER, JR.

THE CHURCH'S TEACHING MINISTRY

RAY L. HENTHORNE

*THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES AND THEIR WORK—*  
A UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST RESPONSE

ROBERT S. PAUL

"SCRIPTURE, TRADITION, AND THE GUARDIANS OF  
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## THEOLOGY, RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, AND THE DISCIPLES

JOHN R. SCUDDER, JR.

*Chairman, Department of Education and Psychology,  
Atlantic Christian College, Wilson, North Carolina*

"Theology!! Theology! Rah! Rah! Rah!!!" exclaimed a state director of the campus ministry as we left a futile interdenominational meeting which had degenerated into a theological wrangle. Noting my startled look, he very quickly explained: "I know I talk a lot about the need in our day for greater theological insight and for a reconsideration of orthodox Protestant theology; but frankly I'm fed up with young student workers who try to find theological justification for the most practical, and often trivial, matter. We could finish that detail of organization in short order if its orthodoxy had not been tested against the theology our young friend assimilated in order to pass last year's theological exams. Frankly, I am getting tired of receiving tirades against activism and theological smoke screens as answers to my inquiries about the state of our ministry to particular colleges."

My freind had hit incisively a basic weakness in modern Protestant Christian education. In our zeal to found religious education on sound Protestant Christian theology, we have tended to become so obsessed with theology that we have neglected both educational theory and the practical side of Christian education. Indeed, for some uncritical religious educators, theology has become a panacea eliminating the need for such mundane considerations as more effective church school administration and classroom teaching.

If we Disciples join the trend to depreciate the role of education in Christian education by making it an adjunct of theology, we will dis-



parage our own contributions to religious education. We Disciples have been as negligent in seeing the theological implications of our pedagogy as we have been resourceful in using pedagogical insight effectively in religious education.<sup>1</sup> The founding fathers, especially Alexander Campbell, had keen insight into religious pedagogy. Campbell's successors, Isaac Errett, Francis Green, and W. W. Dowling, and early twentieth century religious educators like Herbert Moninger and Marion Stevenson laid a foundation in religious pedagogy from which the Disciples were able to play a leading role in the formation of the modern religious education movement. Disciple contributions to the development of the modern religious education movement were much greater than one could expect of a young and small denomination. Two of the ten founders of this movement, according to Paul Vieth, were Disciples: Walter Scott Athearn and William Clayton Bower. Prior to World War I Athearn was primarily responsible for developing the concept of the church school and for initiating the modern leadership education program. Athearn, along with Robert M. Hopkins, helped to form the International Council of Religious Education in 1922. Bower was the leader in developing the theory for the experience-centered approach to the curriculum of religious education and along with Hazel A. Lewis attempted to develop such a curriculum in the 1920's for the International Council. Between 1936 and 1950 Roy G. Ross served as General Secretary of the International Council which, under his leadership, became the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches in 1950. A list of the staff of the International Council up to 1948 showed that Disciple contributions to the staff were much greater than their size relative to the total membership of the Council would have indicated. In addition, Disciples like Athearn, Bower, and Harry C. Munro made important contributions to the theory and scholarship of the religious education movement. For the most part, Disciple contributions resulted from applying modern ideas in education to religious education in the uncritical manner typical of the first generation leaders of the religious education movement. The uncritical use of these "democratic" or "progressive" ideas was possible because the Disciples, like the leaders in religious education, disdained authoritarian creeds, stressed freedom in religion, and believed that religious education was the primary means of bringing persons into the Christian faith. More important, their faith in religious education rested on the common assumption "that the word of God was not alien to man, that God's word could become active in man's life through education and that Christian nurture inclined one to become a Christian."<sup>2</sup>

The revival of orthodox theology challenged these assumptions with such vigor that during the 1940's there was a veritable war between the adherents of liberal religious education and their neo-orthodox adver-

saries. Beginning with Randolph Crump Miller's *The Clue to Christian Education*, published in 1950, books, articles, and speeches in increasing number proclaimed the order of the day to be the theological reconstruction of religious education. So rapidly did this new trend develop that by 1960 even William Clayton Bower was willing to concede that the liberals had lost control of the religious education movement to religious educators who were trying to bring religious education in line with modern theological trends.<sup>3</sup>

As the religious education movement became more and more pre-occupied with theology, the Disciples increasingly lost their position of prominence. Certainly today we have no religious educators with an influence in the thought and practice of religious education comparable to that of Athearn, Bower, Munro, Hopkins, Lewis, and Ross in the days before the revival of interest in theology. Our slow reaction to this revival is not surprising in the light of our traditional lack of concern with the relationship of theology and religious education. With our heritage of neglect of this relationship in a day of theological emphasis, we *now* must face the problem of our failure to keep pace with the theological reconstruction of religious education.

The most obvious way to deal with this problem is to develop a "crash program" psychology with regard to stressing theology in religious education. Indeed, this is a great temptation for religious educators in our day. Often a religious educator will find himself in a position of leadership because of his practical accomplishments. Then he discovers he is not accepted by the leaders of the religious education movement because his abilities are educational rather than theological. His tendency is to throw himself into the study of theology. This approach to the problem has at least two basic weaknesses: (1) It tends to produce a shallow artificial theology divorced from religious education. (2) It takes the religious educator away from his primary work which is educating.

Most of us have encountered the shallow products resulting from sudden attempts to climb on the theological band wagon. Some years ago I attended a meeting at which a religious educator of considerable accomplishment in the practice of religious education was dealing with a very practical matter. In the middle of this well-conducted meeting our leader suddenly began a tirade on how we had neglected theology in religious education. Then we were referred to one of the pioneer attempts to relate theology to religious education. To my dismay, this work, which I had recently reviewed, was an attack on the approach to religious education which our leader was very capably developing. After the session I asked our leader why this particular book had been recommended. The answer was that everyone in religious educational circles was talking about this book and that it seemed to be theologically deep.

Relating the foregoing incident was in no way an attempt to disparage the importance of practitioners in religious education. On the contrary, I actually felt that our leader was a far more accomplished religious educator than the author of the book to which we had been referred was a theologian. One of the tragic effects of our overstress on theology has been our tendency to evaluate both the practice and the theory of religious education by theological criteria alone. Religious educators are accustomed to being accosted by aspiring theologians who have recently learned of the evils of something called liberal religious education. These modern Don Quixotes valiantly charge with theological lances readied to slay imagined giants called "progressives." Dashing headlong into a windmill, rather than jolting them back to reality, merely convinces them that they have been the victims of a sinister sorcerer called Dewey. Trying to play the role of Sancho Panza can be most exasperating. Recently I spent most of an afternoon in an argument with a pastor who was determined to make an educational determinist out of me. As long as we were discussing religious education there was no real encounter or understanding. Finally, in desperation I suggested that we forget religious education and discuss music education. I told him that I did not think that by using educational processes I could teach a child to appreciate good music. But I did think by exposing a child to the right music at the proper time with appropriate methods that I could make it more likely that the child would eventually appreciate good music. Then I added that I believed the same process applied to religious education in that although we could not bring about a child's salvation by proper nurture, we could make it more likely. With apparent relief he observed, "Why, you are an educational conservative!" Although he had put me in the right category on the basis on inadequate evidence, I was satisfied. He finally had come to see that one's educational theory can be as significant as his theology in determining his theory of religious education.

We could learn much from the study of the progressive education movement which would help us avoid one of the pitfalls of our current stress on theology. The progressives assumed that the key to solving the educational problems of our nation, if not all of the problems of mankind, lay in gaining adherence to their educational theory which stressed experience, meeting the needs and interests of students, problem solving, and approaching education pragmatically. They gained control of many of the education departments of our colleges and universities in which they prepared teachers for progressive schools. When some impertinent student asked where these schools were located, he was usually rebuked and told these were the schools of the future. Yet, so successful were the progressives in popularizing their theories that they convinced even their enemies that public schools of America were rapidly



becoming progressive. Even today some of our leading periodicals are conducting campaigns against progressive education in spite of the fact that the Progressive Education Association died from lack of interest among educators. Much of this windmill tilting could be eliminated by merely asking, "Where are the progressive schools which are ruining our youth?" Even the progressives admit now that they had little influence on the schools. I recently sat in on a discussion in which some of the leading progressive philosophers of education in the South searched their souls to discover the reason they had so completely failed to influence the schools in our area. The answer they came up with was that their students picked up the jargon of progressivism but taught in the same manner as their predecessors. Perhaps another reason for their failure was that they were too busy planning for the "schools of the future" to bother themselves with preparing teachers to teach in the schools that actually existed.

If the progressives who had so much influence in the preparation of teachers had so little influence on the public school, is it not ludicrous to blame the weaknesses of our church school, where the teachers are for the most part untrained laymen, on liberal religious education? In spite of this, the evil effects of liberalism on the church schools have been decried so frequently over the past two decades that by now surely even the orthodox must be bored with recounting them. Where would one go to find a progressive church school, or for that matter a liberal Protestant church? Frankly, our program of education in the church has been too inept to have been led astray by liberal religious education. Consequently, looking to theology to save us from the evils of progressivism is like trying to improve a football team by replacing the single wing with the T-formation when the players on the team do not know how to block and tackle.

Theology, as important as it is, cannot tell us how the Church can educate its children with its limited resources in an increasingly secular society where the basic education of the child is carried out by public schools. We simply have not been able to do this in the past through sporadically attended church school classes meeting for less than one hour a week and taught by untrained laymen. Faced with the frustrations of conducting significant religious education in our day, we are easily enticed away from our primary responsibility. We can seek compensation for failure to develop a half-way satisfactory program of Christian education at First Church in some county seat town by depreciating the shallow activism in the church schools of our mediocre middle class churches by comparing them with THE CHURCH as described by Biblical theology. While many of our churches undoubtedly deserve such criticism for their obsession with the immediate practical problems involved in preserving the church schools as an institution, forsaking



these mundane matters to pursue pure theology will merely further convince our parishioners that theology is an esoteric pursuit unrelated to the practical affairs of the church. By our failure to demonstrate the necessary relationship between theology and practice we will help perpetuate the divorcement of theology from pedagogy which has plagued us throughout our history.

We Disciples have stood on the side lines for two decades now while our colleagues in other denominations have labored to wed pedagogy to theology. We are too late to claim even a "me too" status in the current revival of theological speculation concerning religious education, because the obsession with theology in Protestant religious education is waning. Recently, D. Campbell Wyckoff, one of the leaders in the theological reconstruction of religious education, stated that "ours is a period in which the chief need is for 'settling down,' using what we have and what we know to do a better job."<sup>4</sup> We would be ill-advised to soar off into theological speculation at a time when religious educators, who have been preoccupied with theological questions, are returning to face the educational issues which have been our forte through the years.

Although the trend is moving in the direction of our strength, there is a more pressing reason for not substituting theological speculation for our traditional ability to translate pedagogy into religious education. A Catholic priest concluded a lecture with a crescendo eloquent oratory demanding that sisters relate the great doctrines of the church to their teaching. One soft spoken sister, after enthusiastically endorsing all that the father had said, asked, "Father, how would you suggest I relate these doctrines to my class of second graders?" There was an awkward silence, followed by some "hemming and hawing," a tirade against those who neglect doctrine, and a smoke screen of theological terminology. Certainly by now, we all—especially we Disciples—see the need for theology in religious education, but all of our tirades against liberal religious education and our brilliant discussion of theology will not change the fact that the primary responsibility of a religious educator is to say what the gospel has to do with a class of second graders. For the religious educator this is not mainly a hypothetical question because next Sunday morning, when the second graders come bursting through the door of a church, it is his responsibility to give them bread rather than a stone.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Much of the information in this article is based upon the research done for my doctoral dissertation which was recently published as: *A History of Disciple Theories of Religious Education* (Lexington: The College of the Bible, 1963).

2. Ibid., p. 52.

3. William Clayton Bower, "Recent Trends in Christian Education, An Appraisal," *Religious Education*, LV (July-August) pp. 243-247.

4. D. Campbell Wyckoff, *Theory and Design of Christian Education Curriculum* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961), p. 55.

# THE CHURCH'S TEACHING MINISTRY

RAY L. HENTHORNE

*Director of Youth Department, Christian Board of Publication,  
St. Louis, Missouri*

Teaching has been recognized from the beginning of the church as one of its fundamental ministries. We live in an era when it has become mandatory to re-evaluate *why* we teach and *what* we teach. With the forces of darkness overrunning the church it is a matter of dire urgency to know not only why and what, but *how* the church is to teach. There have been mixed motives for teaching, and confusion as to how the church teaches. The what of the teaching has been too much like a jungle—large, unorganized, sometimes impenetrable, trailless at many important points, and with too little understanding of the essentials.

The ministers of the church are its first and primary teachers. Because many of these have abandoned the ministry of teaching this ministry is weakened and perhaps destined to early failure. The clergy must recognize the centrality of teaching if the church is to live, for the life of the church is contingent upon its ability to communicate its faith and its life and work. The teaching ministry is far more important than the twenty minute sermon. First things should be first!

The faith of the church has a historical past, which includes the biblical record and the history of the people of God to the present. The faith of the church has a historical present, and the communication of this present faith is more essential to the future of the church than communicating the faith of earlier days. This is not intended to de-emphasize the faith of the New Testament church and the centuries intervening that period and the present. It will always be desirable and essential to communicate the faith of the fathers throughout the span of the centuries. But faith of the fathers must never be substituted for the faith of today. The church now must have a faith which compels communication, and which it communicates. If the church's communication of faith is only biblical, or of the historical past, then faith may be perceived as dead and lacking relevance for today. It is the faith of the church now that counts.

It will not be enough even if the minister is able to reorient his ministry to teaching. Laymen must also see the fundamental role of teaching in the renewal of the church. Teachers must find a deeper and more Christian motivation for teaching. And the learners must seriously face their own responsibility to learn and engage themselves with enthusiasm in learning. When the power which drives a great engine is severed the engine gradually slows until it is dead. In a day when the church seems to have a poor connection with its source of power and is slowly running

down something drastic must be done to help the church re-engage itself to the source of its power, God.

The existence of the church is always dependent upon its ability to communicate a dynamic and meaningful faith. It has to teach or die. The why of the church's teaching is frequently expressed in its objective for the teaching ministry "that all persons be aware of God through his self-disclosure, especially his redeeming love as revealed in Jesus Christ, and that they respond in faith and love—to the end that they may know who they are and what their human situation means, grow as sons of God rooted in the Christian community, lives in the Spirit of God in every relationship, fulfill their common discipleship in the world, and abide in the Christian hope."<sup>1</sup>

It is the church that teaches, not a department of Christian education, or of world outreach education, or evangelism education, or social action and community service. The teaching ministry is as broad as the faith of the church, as broad as its life and work. Consequently it is impossible to assign this ministry on the basis of a parcel to this department, another parcel to that department, and so on. The wholeness and oneness of the church demands an approach of wholeness and oneness in its teaching.

The objective for the teaching ministry serves the church in its teaching by giving direction to all of the planned educational experiences. It serves to focus the ministry of teaching. It also serves as a standard or measure by which the short-term goals and the resources for teaching may be selected. And it serves as a means of evaluation of the educational program, as well as the short term goals of the teaching-learning experiences.

The church has long suffered from the illusion that it can fulfill its teaching ministry in one hour on Sunday morning—9:30 to 10:30 a.m. This may be the poorest hour in the whole week for educational purposes. It is a dress-up affair (high heels and hats for the girls and women with suits and neckties for the boys and men) and for most of those who attend education is not the thing most on their minds. The atmosphere and pressure of time are not conducive to learning. It is often stage setting for what is to follow. Perhaps Protestants should settle for the ministry of worship on Sunday morning and find other time to fulfill its ministry of teaching.

It is unlikely that the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) will forgo the Sunday Church School, but they should be challenged to double and quadruple the hours given to education. Perhaps churches should have two approaches to the Sunday church school. One could be the fellowship approach that so many now have—where one can guarantee that little education will not take place, and where fellowship is unlikely to bring one into involvement with his fellows. The other ap-



proach could be for those desiring to engage in a serious program of teaching-learning. This might be scheduled for two and a half hours on Sunday morning, with other courses of study offered during week days and nights. The church building should serve as a school at least five of its seven days a week, and perhaps all seven. Maybe the word Sunday should be dropped entirely. This originally designated the day of the week when the learning activities were scheduled. For many churches it has come to mean that there is but one day a week for such activities, thus implying that the church need not teach through the week. In a full blown program of education the Sunday church school might be likened to a night course in a university curriculum. It is a makeshift for those who cannot engage seriously in educational pursuit, not a substitute for it. With no more than the Sunday school the church will continue to wither until it is dead on the vine—if indeed it is not already dead.

### I. HOW THE CHURCH TEACHES

The church teaches best when it is most like what the church was created to be—a community of the people of God, worshipping, teaching, serving, witnessing. The authority of its teaching is limited by what it is. What it says (proclaims) is always evaluated by what it is perceived to be by the learner. The church invites the learner to enter the program of the teaching ministry and provides leaders and resources for the learner to engage in the tasks of learning.

Frequently the church has erred by thinking that anyone can teach, and has built its educational program on this false assumption. Since the church must communicate its faith, it may be deduced as a first requisite for any teacher engaged by the church that he has a sufficiently dynamic and meaningful faith that the church recognizes it is its faith to be communicated to children, youth, adults. Unless a teacher has a faith to share, and feels a compelling urge to share, he had better not attempt to teach. Without a firsthand faith he will communicate a sterile and dead faith. Few suckers in today's world will buy that kind of faith. Teachers teaching without a dynamic faith can destroy the church. It can only be otherwise when and if God finds ways to circumvent and transform the teacher's witness.

It would be a wise practice for the churches to close down every class that cannot be staffed with a teacher who has a faith worthy of being communicated in the name of the church. Let the church repent and turn again unto the Lord that it may be sure what it is teaching.

It is not sufficient to examine the materials used in the educational plan, and to select those which meet the doctrinal demands of what the church wants to teach. This is important, but even more important is the selection of those persons who staff the educational program of the church. The church that depends only upon teachers of faith who are



compelled to share that faith will discover that it is being the church, and that this makes a vital difference in what is communicated to the learners. Perhaps one of the first steps toward the renewal of the church is to find and depend upon the nucleus of persons of faith.

It goes without saying, that the effectiveness of such persons as teachers will be increased if they know something about teaching and the way persons learn. But if a church must choose between these two components of good teaching—a teacher of faith, or a teacher with all of the skills of teaching—then the church has no choice. It must select the teacher of faith.

The church equipped with good teachers to communicate its faith needs a carefully planned program or curriculum. This must be conceived in maximal rather than minimal terms. The best in space, equipment, materials, and tools is desirable but not essential. The right kind of Christian community teaching, aided by an adequate curriculum plan with sufficient resources to support it must be a goal sought and fulfilled in order that renewal may come quickly enough to turn the tides running against the church.

The goals of the educational program must be measurable by the learner and by the teacher. Each must be able to evaluate progress in learning. This means that the teacher must be helped to see what he has to teach and to know when the learner has learned it. The learner must be able to see what he is expected to learn, and to know when he has learned it. This is an area in the teaching ministry of the church that will require much study and sweat before it becomes a reality. At present the church is so unclear about what it wants to teach that it is unable to state evaluative goals. Often, the church does not even realize that it should be able to state such goals.

These are some of the ingredients of how the church teaches. It teaches through persons who have something to teach which grows out of their own experience of Christian faith and life. It teaches by organizing what it has to teach into a total curriculum (or program) plan of education. And it teaches by stating its goals for learning in such fashion that both a teacher and learner can know when they have been achieved.

## II. WHAT THE CHURCH TEACHES

The teaching ministry has as its purview man's whole field of relationships in light of the gospel. In this field of relationships is God, man, nature and history. The basis of this teaching is not the field of relationships, nor the gospel, but the field of relationships in light of the gospel. The gospel throws light upon the relationships, illuminating them, and providing a perspective from which to view and participate in them.

Faith is often equated with believing in God, or believing the gospel. But this is too limited to provide an adequate basis for what is meant by

the Christian faith. Faith must involve the relevance, the meaning and value, which the field of relationships takes on when viewed through the perspective of the gospel and lived under its light. The field of relationships encompasses all of man's existence, and indeed makes up his existence. This field is bounded by all of man's relationships with reality. Reality has three dimensions: the Divine, the human, and the natural. The gospel illuminates the dimensions of reality and it is experience with these illuminated dimensions which makes up the faith of the Christian.

The gospel may be defined as God's whole redemptive action for man. The redemptive action of God is not a single event, but a series of events beginning with creation, reaching a climax in Jesus Christ, and continuing to and in the present. The implications of the redemptive action bear upon man in his whole field of relationships.

It has to do with how man is able to respond to dimensions of reality within his field of relationships that determines his degree of achievement in the Christian life. It is the authenticity of these relationships, their meaning and value which constitutes what Christians have to communicate in the name of the church to the present generation. In this they are aided by the previous experiences of Christians, by the biblical record in both the Old and New Testaments, by the tradition and history of the church, and primarily by the authenticity of present Christian faith and the life experienced within this faith.

"Light is thrown on man's relationship with God, the sovereign Creator, Father, Redeemer, Judge, so that man may relate to him as a faithful and obedient son. Light is thrown on man's relationship with man (himself and others in society—family, community, world), so that he may relate to man as he was created, in the image of God, as he is, sinner, and as he may become, redeemed. Light is thrown on man's relationship with nature, created and sustained by God to be ruled over, cared for and used by man as a steward, so that he may relate to nature as the setting in which God has created man to live. Light is thrown on his relationship with history, ruled and overruled by the sovereign Lord, moving forward toward his designed consummation of it, so that man may relate to history as the continuum of God's activity and the temporal aspect of man's response to God's activity.

"In view of this conviction, it is proper to consider the scope of the curriculum for Christian education as the whole field of relationships viewed in light of, or from the perspective of, the gospel (God's whole continuous redemptive action toward man, known especially in Jesus Christ).

"In this statement of scope, the crucial phrase from the point of view of content is "in light of the gospel." This is what makes it a statement of scope for Christian education. Therefore in the delineation of content

of the curriculum, the gospel is the crucial factor. It is the given in Christianity and therefore, becomes the given in the church's educational work. Accordingly, the gospel must be so communicated through the curriculum that it will shed light on man's whole field of relationships."<sup>2</sup> To put it somewhat more specifically, Christians must so experience the gospel (God's whole continuous redemptive action) that every relationship in their field of relationships is illuminated and redeemed. It is faith, born of this kind of experience, which the church is commissioned to teach, to communicate, to all those who come into its teaching ministry.

The basic weakness in present day teaching by the church is failure at the point of dynamic dialogue between the gospel and man in his field of relationships. The church seems to have mislaid the gospel for it appears to be unable to describe a gospel which appears to have meaning and value in the daily routiness of living. It may be that the speed with which sophistication has overruled so much of the world has outdistanced the changing interpretation of the gospel. It is still safe to say that the gospel does not change, but certainly the interpretation of it changes. In too many instances the gospel is still interpreted as having much to do with heaven, hell, smoking, card parties, dancing, and drinking. Some years back the church was certain that these were the issues at the heart of man's redemption.

In this generation (excluding those relatively untouched by sophistication) there is little concern in heaven and hell, and perhaps none at all in smoking, card playing, dancing and drinking. Most churches are now silent on these latter, but they may still mouth the words of heaven and hell. For the most part the churches have found nothing new by way of an adequate interpretation of the gospel so the church is without a message to man in his field of relationships. The church is dumb before the world.

Some things seem obvious if the church's interpretation of the gospel is to catch up with relevance (meaning and value) for the modern world. First, there must be some new dimension to the experience of knowing the God who redeems, why redemption is necessary, and the character of man's response to God's redemptive acts.

Man's limited encounter with space has exploded his three dimensional world of heaven-earth-hell. With the explosion the little God that so many had is lost in the vastness of the universe. It is taking too long to re-assess our knowledge and experience of God and give assurance that even in such a universe he is big enough to be its Creator, Sustainer and Ruler, as well as man's Creator, Judge, and Ruler. It may be that we are again gathered on Mount Carmel in a contest between the gods of this world and the God of the universe. The burden of proof is upon the people of God. Is their faith equal to the contest between the gods and



God? Christians dare not fail the test of faith, or the church will continue to wither on the vine until dead. Our God is great enough, and even if the church fails him he will raise up other children to worship him and proclaim his word. But why should we make this necessary? What he has disclosed about himself is sufficient for this hour in man's history. It is not God who is found wanting, but the church.

Throughout the long history of the Judaeo-Christian religion God has been experienced as the Creator, Sustainer, Judge, Redeemer. The matter of good and evil has been a continuing problem in every generation. Today is no exception. We may be unclear about what is good and what is evil, but the problem of good and evil is even more relevant. When the sins of the father were visited only upon the children and the children's children there was little to worry about. But now, when the sins of the father may be visited upon the whole world there is a great deal to worry about.

The Judaeo-Christian doctrine of man has always viewed man as sinner. He is still sinner even when his sins are forgiven. Consequently we must distinguish between sins and sin. In the plural, sins, behavioral matters seem to be involved. But in sin, the singular, we are dealing with a fundamental relationship between man and God. This relationship is less than perfect, because man is less than perfect. The holiness of God always reveals the partial holiness of man. Caught in the pure light of God's holiness man's first response is a feeling of unworthiness and sinfulness. He senses his need for redemption—to repent and be forgiven, to be made whole in his relationships with God, his fellows and his universe.

The fact that the word sin was almost lost from the vocabulary of the church in these latter years indicates that man's understanding and experience of the nature of God had degenerated to this point that God made very little difference to the life of man. Man could take him or leave him and the consequences would be about the same. With a God who made such a little difference the experience of sin had little if any meaning for Christians. Consequently they did not need to talk about sin, much less did they need to be redeemed from sin.

It should now be clear to us that our religion, based upon God's whole redemptive action and its implications for man, can only live with meaning if our God is big enough to make the decisive difference in what man perceives to be of ultimate value. If our experience is with a God who is that big we cannot escape the implications of such a God for man as sinner and the urgency for redemption—restoration of the God-man, man-man, and man-nature relationships on the high basis of God's self-disclosure and the appropriate basis for response.

We have lived in a time when sins ceased to be sin. Sins seem to have been based more on the rights and wrongs of culture than the rights



and wrongs of the Christian faith. Things which one culture believes to be wrong is often perceived to be right in some other culture, and vice versa. We have lived through the time when smoking, card-playing, and dancing were sins of the first order to view them in a completely different light. Perhaps social drinking has undergone or is undergoing, the same kind of transformation. The church should never have been trapped by such insignificant interpretations of sin. Sin is no mere behavioral deed. Sin is a condition. It is conscious or unconscious rebellion against God, alienation from God, separation from him. The condition of sin is derived from humanness, from ignorance and/or deliberate intent to escape from relationship with God.

The puritanical morality which has been accepted by so many of the members of the church as the standard for sins must be reevaluated, corrected, or discarded as being inadequate as a basis for understanding what sin is and why one needs redemption. The weakness of puritanical morality is that it does not get to the foundations of sin. It gets lost in the trappings of passing sins and lingers into a day when the church can ill afford to have the redemption of God identified with being saved from such sins as smoking or card playing.

This is not intended to take away from any value there may be in identifying certain things as sins, but it is to plead that the church recognize what true sin is and man's need to be redeemed in it. Man remains a sinner even after he has overcome all of the sins made unpopular by the Puritans and those who follow in their train. Man never gets to the place where he is beyond need for redemption from sin. The story of God (the gospel) is told in the many acts of God to redeem man. It is God who redeems. It is man in his whole field of relationships who needs redemption. Each of these relationships must achieve a Christian basis, i.e., meet the test of the light of the gospel, in daily living as man comes to terms with all three dimensions of reality—God, man, natural order. Life lived on such a Christian basis may be said to have been redeemed. Such a response is evidence of redemption.

What has all of this to do with the teaching ministry? It is at the very heart of that ministry. For it is the faith which derives from having experienced redemption by the Father God that is the basis of what the church has to communicate to those with whom it would share its faith. Its faith is that it knows a God who is big enough to make the decisive difference in ultimate values, and it has experienced the deeper meanings which come into each relationship of whatever kind when that relationship is lived in the Spirit of God.

In its essence, the teaching ministry shares its faith in God and declares its faith in the worth of life when it is lived in harmony with God's self-disclosure, especially his redeeming love as revealed in Jesus Christ.

The church must learn again to talk about a God who has meaning

and relevance to life now. Failure to achieve this will doom the church to little more than a few pages in the history books of the centuries. Even now the world pays little heed to the church, and many of its members may be counted among those who see nothing to heed. The gospel is dynamic only when it is interpreted with meaning and value for life. It has power to save. But its power too often remains locked in vague generalizations and promises about which few persons now care. The message of the gospel must have a fresh vigorous formulation. The church must discover what it means by the gospel. What it means to be saved in the twentieth century, not the eighteenth is the crying need of this hour.

When, or if the church is able to verablize the message of the gospel so that persons deeply sense their need for it and recognize its value for their living, then the gospel will shed light on man in his whole field of relationships and salvation will come to those persons and families and nations who dwell in that light. When the church can declare the message of the gospel with relevance then it, like its Master, will be able to speak with authority. We now sound like the scribes and Pharisees. Will we ever sound like the Master Teacher? The world cannot long wait for the word of God which is the message derived from the gospel, for it is that word which is bread and drink for mankind.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. The Cooperative Curriculum Project, National Council of Churches.
2. Quoted from "The Design for the Curriculum of the Church's Educational Ministry," Copyrighted by the Division of Christian Education, Department of Curriculum Development, National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

# THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES AND THEIR WORK: A United Church of Christ Response

ROBERT S. PAUL

*Waldo Professor of Church History, Hartford Seminary  
Foundation, Hartford, Connecticut*

The editor of *THE SCROLL* asked me to review Dr. Loren E. Lair's book, *The Christian Churches and Their Work*, (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1963) in order to raise the underlying theological issues as they appear to a member of the United Church of Christ. Let me say that I do so with very great diffidence for I am conscious that it is very easy for a person who does not share a specific church tradition to misunderstand it and to misrepresent it. If I do this unwittingly, please forgive me: I am trying to raise the issues honestly, and not make debating points.

First, I must also express my gratitude for the opportunity of reading Dr. Lair's book since I found it a mine of information about the Disciples of Christ, their work and the principles which have inspired that work. Dr. Lair obviously has a deep affection for the life and work of the churches which he serves and he knows their possibilities and their problems intimately. He recognizes that many of the societies and agencies which have grown up within the brotherhood have appeared out of what Friends would call the "concern" of interested individuals to meet the specific needs. The fact that such societies have sprung up to carry forward the mission of the church in evangelism, social service, and in care for the ministry can only be regarded as evidence of the Holy Spirit's work in the midst of this movement.

However, the individuals who were responsible for the initiative could expect no official help from the brotherhood as a whole. As they were left free to secure what help they could from the local churches, so they were left free to organize themselves in whatever ways they saw fit. Therein lies Dr. Lair's problem and his thesis, for he argues that although this good-will has made an invaluable contribution, it has too often led to reduplication of effort and to structures that are more unwieldy than the brotherhood can carry. Put bluntly, Dr. Lair contends that the Disciples must take another look at the structures that have grown up within their fellowship, review the relationship of the local church to the wider fellowship of churches, and examine the effectiveness of the whole work of the Church.

From the point of view of one who is 'outside' it seems that Dr. Lair has made his case. His book is written for Disciples and therefore contains a good deal of domestic housekeeping that will not interest the general reader but which will probably be fascinating and invaluable to those who are engaged in the work of these churches. If the principles

of church government among Disciples are as he has defined them, then his argument for "representative democracy" would appear to this reader to be not only logically sound but also patiently necessary.

But the fundamental question is whether Dr. Lair has done justice to the fundamental principles of the movement. Here I begin to raise questions.

1. However, before I turn to specific theological issues, I must enter one mild protest on historical grounds. In presenting us with the earlier history of the 'Christian Churches' the author mentions the work of James O'Kelly of Virginia, and his attempt to democratize Methodism which led to a group of 'Christian Churches' being formed in the South; also the revolt of the two New England Baptists, Elias Smith, a minister, and Abner Jones, a layman, against the prevailing Calvinism, which led to a parallel movement under their influence spreading from New England into parts of New York State, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. These two movements shared many of the tenets and ideals held by the followers of Barton Stone in Kentucky, or those who followed Thomas and Alexander Campbell, and the impression we get from Dr. Lair's account is that the spiritual inheritance of all these movements is represented by the Disciples of Christ.

However, I am sure Dr. Lair does not believe that the Disciples, and they alone, represent this heritage. The United Church of Christ would wish to put in a claim, not only because it accepts many of the cherished New Testament insights of this movement, but more concretely because of the 1931 union whereby the churches which traced their descent through James O'Kelly, and those which were founded through Elias Smith and Abner Jones because united with Congregationalists to form 'the Congregational Christian Church.' *The United Church Herald* has as one of its most interesting ancestors Elias Smith's *The Herald of Gospel Liberty*. We too have some share in the 'Christian' inheritance.

2. At the same time we must point out that there is a paradox or anomaly at the very center of the Disciples' position, which is illustrated in the title of Dr. Lair's book, *The Christian Churches and Their Work*. Fortunately I had been warned that the book is concerned specifically with the structure and organization of *the Disciples* or I should certainly have expected something far more comprehensive. For the average Protestant, to speak of 'the Christian Churches' in a title implies a book which will say something about the work of Baptists, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Methodists—in fact the whole ecumenical spectrum of the Church. You will immediately reply that this was not the intention of the author and that the term "Churches of Christ" is the historic way in which the congregations that sprang from the work of Barton Stone and the Campbells, have preferred to be known. I recognize this, but I suggest it points to an ambiguity which should be resolved before the



restructuring of the church's life is carried too far. If I read the history of the Disciples movement clearly, it began as the spontaneous movement of the Spirit which had as one of its primary objectives the realization of the church's unity by recalling Christians to the New Testament. On the American frontier it had amazing evangelical success, but we must conclude that it failed in its major attempt to bring about the unity of the Church on the basis of New Testament Restorationism. The ambiguity is in the claim to be "The Churches of Christ" while in fact the movement is forced to act in all respects like one denomination of Christians among many other denominations of Christians. I realize that Disciples do not like to be called a 'denomination'—not many Christians of any kind do—but the alternative to self-recognition as a 'denomination' is simply the exclusive claim to be "The Churches of Christ." In our present understanding of the Church an exclusive claim of this kind is a fundamental denial of the ecumenicity to which we are called; for the ecumenical spirit begins not with brave theories about church reunion, but in our own penitence—including our penitence for the things that we have created which *force* us to act denominationally. Our Lord is surely concerned not so much our denials of denominationalism as with whether we *act* denominationally. One must try to understand the confusion that the use of the term 'Churches of Christ' introduces for one who is not a Disciple, and raises the fundamental question whether the Restorationism of the early Disciples was a adequate basis for the Christian unity which they sought and expected.

Having said that, I will now try to be a good boy and refer to the movement as the 'brotherhood'!

3. At the end of the book Dr. Lair says,

There is more, however. The story of organization could lead some to trust in its power too much. The church of our Lord is unlike a secular structure. It must have form for the content of its message. Yet, the church can never be measured in terms of business, a political society, or any other social organization. There is a spiritual quality that must be in and work through every and all phases of the life of the church. . . . We have to grow and improve our methods of work. This we will do. Let us do it in keeping with the divine faith, nature, and mission of the church.

This is the place where I wanted his book to begin. He reveals the anomalies of the present structures that have grown up within the movement but the reasons which he gives for revision and amendment are essentially pragmatic. But *are* the reasons essentially pragmatic? Are they not much more fundamentally concerned with the very nature and mission of the Church? If so, we should begin at that point. Given a particular set of circumstances and a tidy mind it is not difficult to work out the logical polity or structural form of any society. However, as Dr. Lair implies, we are concerned with much more than that, with nothing

less than the Church of Jesus Christ, given to us by God. We are concerned, in other words, primarily with *theology* because in defining the nature of the Church and the forms in which it seeks to operate we are fundamentally concerned with *what we believe about the nature of God himself*. If He is redemptive, the Church is redemptive; if He serves mankind, the Church serves mankind.

4. There is another question which is very closely related to the last. The Disciples movement was essentially charismatic: it was essentially a movement of the Spirit of God at a particular time and in a particular place. Yet it is not until we reach page 287 that Dr. Lair gives any recognition to this. Citing the work of the Committee of Eleven in 1960 he says that it was their belief that “. . . agencies, churches, and members should face the issue of restructure with an open mind and with a prayer *for the leading of God's spirit* so that we may be prepared to do that which is required to fulfill his will and mission in and through Disciples.”

What is lacking in many of the tacit presuppositions is a clear doctrine of the Holy Spirit in relationship to the Church. I recognize the Disciples' traditional reluctance to formulate the Christian faith in statements or creeds, and indeed as a Congregationalist of English background I share the same reluctance. But I suggest it is necessary for the Disciples to come to grips with the essentials of the Christian faith in relationship to the Church, and in particular they must define the basis on which change takes place within the Church. There must be a doctrine of the Holy Spirit if we are to be true to the New Testament. Can there be any middle way between sheer pragmatism (in which the Church is seen simply as a human institution) and a clear affirmation of the Spirit of God guiding the Church to meet the changing needs of each new generation? Surely the presence of the living Christ and his Spirit is not only determinative for the very nature of the Church, but it is to this same Spirit that we appeal for justification to interpret the Church anew in each succeeding age.

5. This omission raises some real problems for the Disciples at certain crucial points:

(a) *In the relationship of the pastor to the local congregation.*

Is the pastor simply subject to the members of his local congregation? (p. 273). What is his pastoral authority, and is he not also subject to Jesus Christ? And in so far as he is subject to the congregation is he not rather subject *to the Spirit of Christ as expressed through the congregation*? In our use of the word 'democracy' we must surely be careful to understand that 'democracy' in a Church can never be identical with the kind of democracy that we experience in society. Ultimately in the Church we do not assume that *vox populi* is *vox Dei*. Minister and pastor should together be seeking the will of Christ in the bond of his Spirit.

(b) *The relationship between the local congregation and the wider*

*fellowship of churches.* Dr. Lair makes out a good case for "representative democracy" in the structure of the Disciples movement and the experience of Congregationalists has pushed them in the same direction. But again we must ask whether the ideal is simply to reach the most effective form of democratic representation, or is it not rather to discover the will of Jesus Christ for his Church in both its local and its wider setting? Is there not a sense in which *both* the local church and the Association of Churches (or State Society) must bear witness to the Gospel? Certainly the rights and responsibilities of the local fellowship are of very great importance (what Congregationalist could deny that?) But a local congregation must be open to receiving God's word delivered to it, even when that word is uttered by an assembly, a synod or a convention. Synod and local congregation share a mutual ministry toward each other.

(c) *The nature of authority.*

It appears to me that Disciples no less than Congregationalists have failed to do justice to their doctrine of the Holy Spirit in relation to spiritual authority in the church. Jesus Christ gave authority to his church and we are defending no Gospel principle when we deny it; but churches have so little understood their own heritage in the Gospel that they have interpreted all forms of authority in terms of coercive authority which is more appropriate to a secular State than it is to God's family. The Puritans often rightly used to distinguish between 'magisterial' and 'ministerial' authority—the first was the prerogative of the State and the second was God's gift to the Church. Often in the history of the Church denominations have been guilty of using forms of authority that were coercive rather than persuasive, punitive rather than pastoral and redemptive. The New Testament speaks of authority in a quite different way, and in so far as we claim to be churches of the New Testament we have to bring ourselves under the New Testament judgment. Authority in the Church is the authority of the Living Spirit of Jesus Christ, and *no authority can have any validity which is contrary to his Spirit*; but it is equally true that no local church can truly be *his* church if it refuses to recognize his authority in those who speak to it in his name.

6. We are churches of the New Testament. I have been impressed by the similarity at many points between the history of the Disciples and the history of the churches that I know best. (Even until quite recently the Congregational Union of England and Wales regarded itself as a Union of *Churches*.) Early Congregationalism no less than the Disciples represented a claim to return to the pattern of the New Testament.

On the other hand we have to admit that the literalism of our forefathers no longer provides us with an acceptable basis for our doctrine of the Church. In commenting upon the rival polities—episcopal, presbyterian and congregational—Canon B. H. Streeter once remarked



somewhat pithily that the debate could probably be settled in the words of *Alice in Wonderland*, "Everyone has won, and all shall have prizes." None of us are as sure as we used to be that the New Testament proves our form of Church government to the exclusion of all other forms, and if Alexander Campbell found the elements of presbyterianism, episcopacy, and congregationalism in the New Testament, he was well before his time. (Incidentally, if he did, then why have the Disciples excluded episcopacy from their system of church government?)

However, we are less willing to be dogmatic about what form the New Testament gives to the early Church, and many of us would have great difficulty in reconciling our present position with the literalism on which our historic position was based. Where then do we look for the structure of the Church?

It seems to me that if the letter of Scripture is not to settle the argument, the spirit of Scripture must. In other words, we are concerned not with an appeal to certain selected passages, literally interpreted, but we are concerned with Biblical Theology as a whole. What does the Bible *as a whole* reveal about God, about Jesus Christ, and about the Spirit that speaks in their name? What do these theological questions tell us about the character of the People of God in the Old and New Testament, about the form of authority that this witnessing People owns and expresses, about the nature of their ministry in the World?

We are not alone in this new appeal to Scripture, for Anglicans (e.g. A. T. Hanson, *The Pioneer Ministry*) and others are discovering that they too are having to review positions once defended on the basis of biblical or historical literalism. Perhaps this is the ecumenical hope of these days—we all have to go to the same source and read it with new eyes. At any rate these questions concerning the Church are at the very heart of the ecumenical discussion at the present time.

From the point of view of an outside observer, the major issue for the Disciples seems clear. They may decide to share in the exciting ecumenical exploration of God's will for his Church through a new approach to the Bible, or they may decide to solve their problems in their own way on the basis of practical expediency. I could not presume to say which way they should go, but I am quite certain that according to the direction they ultimately adopt the years 1960-1970 will be for them in the very deepest sense the 'Decade of Decision.'



## “SCRIPTURE, TRADITION, AND THE GUARDIANS OF TRADITION”

Among the theological rediscoveries of the churches within the past few decades is the doctrine of Christian tradition. Our affirmation of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, has given us a new perspective upon our divided churches. We have been led to recognize the existence of a common history whose center is Jesus Christ (Tradition) which stands behind and above all of our separate denominational histories (traditions).

This ecumenical conclusion raises a number of thorny but essential questions for those who take their Faith and Order diet seriously, e.g., the nature of the Christian Tradition, the illumination which the Tradition brings to the traditions, and the relationship between Scripture and Tradition.

The latter topic, the relation between Scripture and the Tradition, came before the second session of the Consultation on Church Union, the outgrowth of the Blake proposal for a church in North America which is truly catholic, truly reformed, and truly evangelical. Meeting in Oberlin, Ohio, March 19-21, 1963, the Consultation adopted the following statement on “Scripture, Tradition, and the Guardians of Tradition.” Delegates and interested observers alike feel this consensus document represents a cardinal achievement for the young Consultation. The complete text of the report is printed below for the study and reaction of our readers.—PAC.

The six churches represented in the Consultation on Church Union recognize and acknowledge that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments have a unique authority.

The Holy Scriptures witness to God’s revelation, fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and to man’s response to the divine revelation. They testify to God’s mighty acts of creation and recreation, judgment and mercy; they declare God’s saving purpose; they proclaim the gospel which is the power of God for salvation; they point to the glorious consummation of his Kingdom which has no end. They are the inspired writing which bear witness to the divine deeds in our history by which God has called into being and sustained his people and by which God calls all men to unite in his service and share in his reconciliation of the world to himself.

Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, the living Lord and Head of the Church, is the center of the Holy Scriptures. In him, the promises of God are fulfilled; to him the apostolic writings bear witness. Because we confess Christ alone (*solus Christus*), in this way we affirm Scripture alone (*sola Scriptura*).

The churches represented in this Consultation affirm the Holy Scriptures to be canonical, that is, the norm of their total life, including worship and witness and teaching and mission.

The members of the Consultation are agreed that there is a historic Christian Tradition. Each of our churches inevitably appeals to that Tradition in matters of faith and practice. But the clearer delineation and characterization of that Tradition is a task still to be completed.

The members of the Consultation, however, are aware that our per-

ception of the relation between the Scriptures and Tradition is taking on new forms and new dimensions. A new understanding of Tradition is making it increasingly clear that Tradition cannot simply be equated with "the traditions of men"—teachings and practices which obscure or corrupt rather than express the revelation to which the Scriptures witness. By Tradition we understand the whole life of the Church, ever guided and nourished by the Holy Spirit, and expressed in its worship, witness, way of life, and its order. As such, Tradition includes both the act of delivery by which the good news is made known and transmitted from one generation to another as well as the teaching and practice handed on from one generation to another. Thus the Evangelist writes: "inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us, just as they were delivered (traditioned) to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also . . . to write an orderly account for you. . . ." (Luke 1:1-3).

In such a sense, the Christian Tradition antedated the formation of the New Testament canon. The New Testament canon appears not as separate from or opposed to the Christian Tradition but rather as an expression of it. Certainly it is the case that in the Church, Scripture and Tradition are found together.

There are at least three relations between Scripture and Tradition (understood as the whole life of the Church) which deserve consideration. (1) Scripture is itself included in the Tradition. The reading of and listening to the Scriptures in worship and the authority of the Scriptures over the teaching of the Church are essential in the life of the Church. (2) The Scriptures are interpreted in the light of the Tradition. The Church does not set itself above the Scriptures; but the Church reads and listens to the Scriptures as a community of faith. (3) The Scriptures are the supreme guardian and expression of the Tradition. This is what the Church intends by its acknowledgment of a canon of Scriptures.

The members of the Consultation are aware that we are confronted not only by Scripture and Tradition (understood as the whole life of the Church) but also by Scripture, Tradition and the traditions—those individual expressions of the Tradition which more or less characterize particular Churches and those customs of the Churches which have arisen in various times and places.

We have no doubt that such traditions must ever be brought under the judgment of the Scriptures. To bring its traditions under the judgment of the Scriptures is an inescapable obligation of the Church.

The Church acknowledges its responsibility for its continuing guardianship of the apostolic testimony to God's act of reconciliation in Jesus Christ. For that guardianship, the whole Church is responsible. The

Scriptures, illuminated by the Spirit in the Church, are the fundamental guardian as they are the source of new life and light.

The Consultation expects to explore further the role of symbols, such as creeds and confessions, and the role of the ministries which have special responsibilities for guarding the Church's total life from distortion and corruption.

# THE SCROLL

*The Journal of the Campbell Institute*

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TWO POEMS

GEORGE EARLE OWEN

Volume LV

Autumn, 1963

Number 3



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## THE CATHOLIC CHALLENGE TO PROTESTANTS

COLBERT S. CARTWRIGHT

*Minister, Pulaski Heights Christian Church, Little Rock, Arkansas*

Discerning Protestants are currently aware of a voice coming from the Vatican which speaks to Protestant churches. It is a voice calling for the reformation of Christ's church—Protestant, Catholic, or Orthodox—everywhere. Today, because of the Roman Catholic Ecumenical Council, we as Protestants are more keenly aware than ever of our own failures to be the church Christ wants in this day and time. The weaknesses the Catholics are uncovering in their own lives are the weaknesses of Protestants as well. In truth we are in our common poverty finding a kinship we had little realized existed. Our common abasement has made us humble. Our humility has put an end to searching out the faults of the others, and sent us inward to search out our own sins and failures.

In his address which opened the second session of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pope Paul VI listed four chief concerns of the Council. As I heard them, I was struck by the thought that these are the very things which also should deeply concern Protestants. Listen to what he said were the big issues before the Catholic Church today. First of all he called upon the Council to study the nature of the church and to express in human language just what the church is. Second, he asked the Council to work toward the renewal of the church. Third, he saw the Council's task to be that of working toward the gathering of all Christians in unity. Fourth, the Pope pointed to the need for the church to enter into a vital dialogue with the contemporary world.

So far as I can see, this is our task as Protestants as well. No Protestant could have better outlined the major needs for Protestant concern than did Pope Paul. Instead of fighting one another we might much more

profitably as Protestants and Catholics search for answers to these common problems. By necessity at this time we will do most of our searching apart from the other. But there is no reason why there cannot also be ways of sharing together at times in our common search. After all, we do share an allegiance to Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, and have been joined to him and to one another in the waters of baptism.

I would like to take Pope Paul's four major concerns and list them up as vital concerns for Protestants as well. These are matters to which our Protestant churches need to give their attention collectively. These are matters you and I need to study and think through for ourselves.

Let us begin with the Pope's concern that the Council express more clearly just what the church is. Unless the Church knows what it has been created by God to be, it can never expect to fulfill its purpose. There should be no question in the mind of any Christian as to what the nature of the church is. The fact is that not many persons of high or low ecclesiastical rank are very clear as to how to describe a true church.

What, for example, is the real mission of the church? What above all else must it do if it is to bear faithfully the name of Christ? This is of utmost concern to Protestants as well as Catholics.

Today we tend to give our answer as to what a "real" church is in terms of what we regard a "successful" church to be. What is a successful church? Our answers are revealing as to what we think the church really to be.

Robert Clyde Johnson suggests that for most of us the success of a church is measured statistically. That is: "The church that receives 188 new members during the year *obviously* is 'more effective' than the church that receives 88, or the church that receives only 8. The church that oversubscribes a \$100,000 budget *obviously* is a 'better' church than the one that must struggle to raise \$10,000. The church that must have two, or even three, services on Sunday morning *obviously* is 'more successful' than the church that has only one." But, as Johnson points out, there is a bit of difficulty with this logic which seems so very obvious. Such obviously successful churches may well be like Kierkegaard's tavern keeper who was buying ale for four cents a bottle and selling it for three cents. When a worried friend tried to point out the economic facts of life, the tavern keeper replied that his friend obviously was not taking sufficiently into account the new volume of business. "This way," he said, "I may sell 100,000 bottles!" Obviously the mission of the church is something more fundamental than expanding church rolls and increasing budgets. But what is its mission? What are the marks of a church which is successful in Christ's eyes? This is something we most urgently need to know if the church is to have any meaning in our day.

Beyond this we need to understand more clearly other aspects of the nature of the church. Having determined what its mission is, we need to

know how best to structure the life of our church so as to fulfill that mission. We need to know where congregations should be located and how they should be organized. We need to understand just what the role of the ordained minister is, and what the role of the lay person is. What is the function of deacons and elders? In terms of our contemporary world, how best can we conduct a program of Christian education? All these and many other related questions hang upon a fresh understanding of what the church really is.

A second concern expressed by the Pope is for the renewal of the church. There is a general recognition among both Catholics and Protestants today that the life within the church is rather dead and dull. Pope Paul in his address to the Council remarked that the "Council is to be a new spring, a reawakening of the mighty spiritual and moral energies which at present lie dormant." We Protestants, too, need such a spiritual and moral awakening.

A few years ago, John R. Mott warned that "we are multiplying Christian activities faster than we were developing Christian life and experience to sustain them." Our churches are thriving, but we as members are a rather spiritually barren lot. Where is the intense thirst for righteousness that marks a Christian? Where are the pure in heart who see God? Are we the merciful who have come to know with awesome wonder God's mercy toward us? Is the church today a company of those who, having been persecuted for righteousness' sake, are inheritors of the kingdom of heaven?

We are a rather conventional lot—we church members of today—not markedly different from those who do not belong to the church. We reflect pretty consistently the same prejudices as the world, and conform to its standards of belief and morality. Somehow the power of God unto salvation has not surged into our lives, and granted us the joy and peace and love and hope that marked the Christians of New Testament times.

These words descriptive of our lives are not spoken in judgment, but in confession. We are spiritually poor, and in need of God's renewal. This is our urgent concern today.

The third great concern expressed by Pope Paul to the Vatican Council is for the gathering of all Christians in unity. For Christians to be separated from one another by fissures of church division is a source of deep anguish to the Pope and to the spiritual leaders of the Roman Catholic church. Such divisions are an affront to Christ and a scandal to the church.

As one listened to the Pope one could not help but feel that he sought no temporal gain in working for Christian unity. He is not motivated by a desire to "take over the Protestants," but by a yearning for reconciliation among all Christ's brethren. It is the nature of love to draw together—not separate. But Christians have become separated, and have



grown suspicious of one another, and have hurled polemics at one another. They have fought and persecuted each other. This is our shame.

As Protestants we, too, recognize the tragedy of our separateness from other Christians. The division of Christ's church is a source of anguish for us. We have been primarily concerned over our divisions within Protestantism, and this is important. We need now to grow less complacent over our divisions as Protestants from Roman Catholics.

At the present time there seems no likelihood that Protestants and Roman Catholics will unite in a single ecclesiastical body. Nevertheless, we can recognize one another as Christians, and seek opportunities to express our oneness in Christ. We can seek to understand one another, enter into conversations about our convictions. We can share in common enterprises of love and justice as they relate to our community and its problems.

Above all, we can as Protestants express toward the Roman Catholic Church the same spirit in regard to our separateness which Pope Paul expressed when he said: "If we are in any way to blame for that separation, we humbly beg God's forgiveness and ask pardon, too, of our brethren who feel themselves to have been injured by us. For our part, we willingly forgive the injuries which the Catholic Church has suffered, and forget the grief endured during the long series of dissensions and separations. May the Heavenly Father deign to hear our prayers and grant us true brotherly peace." We, too, earnestly seek the union of all Christian brethren.

The fourth and last concern expressed by the Pope is that the church might come into closer contact with the world and minister more effectively to it. He recognizes that the church too often has refused to take this world and its needs seriously. It has been content to speak an ecclesiastical language foreign to the world, and has failed to come to grips with the real questions confronting men in their daily lives. The Pope sees the need for the church to become more relevant to men and women in daily living.

We Protestants share this intensity of feeling that the church must become more relevant to the world. The Protestant theologian Henrik Kraemer reminds us that: "The Church does not primarily exist on behalf of itself but on behalf of the world." The world is in great need of the ministries of the church. Yet the church seems rather ill-prepared to help the world. She does not understand the world or really grasp what the world needs. She has so long been preoccupied with the trivialities of her own existence, that she has lost touch with what is going on all about her in the world.

At the Evanston Assembly of the World Council of Churches Dr. D. T. Niles of Ceylon based an address upon Jesus' parable of the householder who heard a knock on his door at midnight. He pictured our

contemporary world with all its revolutionary stirrings of peoples in search of freedom and the good life with food, shelter, clothing, education, and personal dignity. And then Dr. Niles commented: "As in the parable, so in our day, the tense silence of midnight is disturbed by the sound of a knock. It is the door of the church on which somebody is knocking . . . they are not merely the hungry, the homeless, the refugee, the displaced person, the outcast; there are at the church's door, also, every type of community—nations, races, classes, political groupings—knocking for different reasons. . . . The Church is expecting no callers and has laid in no supplies. With what bread it had it has just managed to feed its own children." The world is knocking on the doors of the churches of the world today, asking for sustenance in this critical hour. In too many cases we have nothing of significance to offer. We have not been interested in the world. But as Dr. Niles correctly indicates: "When the church ceases to be concerned with the world, then it ceases to hear God speak to it; for God's conversation with the church is a conversation about the world, and the church must be willing to converse about the world if it is to converse with God."

We as Protestants can well join our Catholic brothers in a re-examination of the church's responsibility to the world in this troubled hour. We need to hear afresh what God is saying to us about his world for which Christ died.

We see, then, that Protestants find a great challenge in the deliberations of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. As Protestants and Catholics we share common concerns for Christ's church. Our concerns are for reform and renewal and unity and greater relevancy. In the pursuit of these tasks we can only wish God's blessings upon one another.

# "MIRROR, MIRROR, ON THE WALL"

*A Sermon by*

JAMES A. LOLLIS

*Minister, Crestwood Christian Church, Lexington, Kentucky*

You may have guessed from the title that it is my plan to consider the most familiar landscape in the world—ourselves. Let us turn immediately to our assignment.

May I observe that while we are becoming more and more certain about the physical world in which we live, we are becoming less and less certain about ourselves.

Better than ever before, we know *where* we are. In the universal scheme of things, we have our little world pegged in the right order. But we do not know better than ever before *who* we are. In the moral and spiritual scheme of things we are far less confident. This fuzziness of self-identity is working havoc with the minds and emotions of millions today.

We remember the young man who stood before a convention of war veterans and spoke in a pleading voice, "Does any one here know who I am?" He was a victim of injury-induced amnesia. But that question could be reversed, and every person at the convention could ask the same. From Socrates to Sam at the corner filling station, the question remains the one that must be faced. "Know thyself." But who knows himself? If we could truly know who we are, I am confident that our lives would be lifted to a lordly compass that would set our every deed and our every day in a context of grandeur. This is true because one believes that God did create man in his image and that there is splendor hidden in every living soul. A basic purpose of life is that we learn as much as possible about who we are.

Pearl Buck, not long ago, in an article in *The Saturday Review* said, "In the world of matter we have deduced and finally discovered elements. In the elements we have tried again to deduce and discover laws, which we have hoped were the laws of life itself, that life of which we are ourselves a part. Could we explain the universe, we could explain ourselves. And to explain ourselves is our human need, our most profound longing." Well, at least, our dilemma takes on noble proportions—unravel our universe and we know ourselves!

The Psalmist also set man in the panoply of heaven and amongst the stars, but faced the same deep question. "What is man that thou art mindful of him . . .?" Mind you, the Psalmist did not share the prevalent idea that man is just a wart on the face of a dying globe; that life is but a brief candle to be snuffed out soon or late by a cold and fickle wind

called death. No, not that, indeed! But rather. "Yet thou hast made him little less than God, and dost crown him with glory and honor."

It is not my nature to advocate a return to this or a return to that, but I am ardently in favor of our discovering some of the wisdom of the ages about ourselves. Not only the Christian religion but any religion that is worth a prayer must be dedicated to the proposition that man is not a talking worm. Man in the image of God is an idea native to the mind and spirit of humankind.

Why should we fall all over ourselves being impressed by the marvels of astronomy, and at the same time kick the astronomer down the observatory stairs and call him a misplaced prune in a strawberry bed! In my judgment the man who finds a hidden star, and traces its elusive path across a universe that can be measured only in light years, has on his hands and in his eyes some stardust. What is man, indeed! Well, he is not Hitler's twisted and demented madness. He is not a more complex white rat to be used for devilish experimentation. Man, in spite of Hitler, is capable of goodness and nobility.

Before we take off for the moon, before we unravel the secrets of Venus, it seems a sensible thing for us to turn again and take a look at man. We will see man the hungry, man the oppressed, man denied his civil rights, man the victim of man's inhumanity to man, and we will see it on our streets. We just can't be the twentieth century and treat man as if he were the caboose of a freight train that is going in an awful hurry nowhere. This century must be the age of man's discovery of man, or we have reached the end of an alley that could have been a highway. It makes little difference what we are doing—making the world safe for democracy, saving our national honor, preserving the sacred rights of property, urban renewal—you name it and it matters not, if in the process people are getting knocked down, abused, ignored, killed. When people get in the way and are hurt and ignored, we are going the wrong way. We must cry, "Stop! Halt! Wait!" We must ask, "Why are we doing this? Is it for man; is it a people project?" If it is for people, these lofty things we are doing, then in heaven's name, why not put their needs, feelings, lives, first! It is time for us to upgrade mankind in this world.

In looking at ourselves may I ask, first, that we not use a magnifying glass.

"Mirror, mirror, on the wall," the vain Queen said, and then she tried to bribe it by asking, "Am I the loveliest one of all?" A magnifying glass always gives back a caricature. How easy to make ourselves the best, the loveliest, the wisest and the most. This tempting extreme lures us. We know we should be wonderful, great, even at times, terrific! But we just aren't, so we doctor the mirror. We sneak in a magnifying glass. It is a neat trick but the worst kind of self-deception.



The popular term is "image." A business is concerned about its public image, a product has to create a favorable image. We speak of our self image. Of course, it is important to us that other people think of us—yes, we wouldn't mind—"more highly than they ought to think." We spend millions each year in our battle with the mirror. But what others think cannot touch in importance what we think. This is the final citadel. It is imperative that one's self image have a basic harmony with what one really is. It is silly for a person who cannot hit middle *C* on a clear day to have illusions of singing Grand Opera. Since I cannot keep my bank statement within one hundred dollars of my personal records, I have no illusions of being an auditor. The size we are and the size we think we are must have harmony or we are badly out of tune. Paul was sharpening this point when he said, "For by the grace given to me I bid every one among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment. . . ."

The hunger for success traps us. We want to succeed. But we must find out what success is for us. Success hunger can be a horrible nightmare. For many it means to be "A Big Shot," a millionaire, a hero, an idol a la Hollywood. This kind of hunger can take on grotesque twists—like a man on a bicycle with a chauffeur!

Many cannot achieve this kind of success. What shall they do? Go out and eat worms? Hide in a corner? Put on a placard and walk around announcing, "I am not a success, kick me"? No sir! Before we will accept this demoralizing picture of ourselves, we will doctor the mirror. We look and see, not what is there, but what we have decided should be there. This is the ultimate tragedy. This is a denial of God's gift to us and in us. This is a refusal to be what God has intended that we be—a real person in our own way.

Do you know the story of Horatio Alger? He was born in 1832, the son of a Unitarian minister, in Boston. He wasn't a blue baby, but his father was a walking edition of the blue laws. After unhappy years at Gates Academy and Harvard—at Harvard he was called "Holy Horatio"—he went to Paris and sipped sin for the first time. However, he came back to Boston and carried his repentance too far by becoming a Unitarian minister. He was not cut for the cloth and went to New York to become a writer. He turned to a formula that expressed his hidden longings—successful men. He wrote lives of Webster, Lincoln and others. However, he was irked by research and turned to fiction. In about thirty years, he wrote 135 novels which sold in the millions of copies. His theme was the same for all: poor boy, widowed mother, clean character and soiled clothes, hard knocks, hard work, a few temptations nobly overcome, a few breaks, and after a thousand clichés—success! Alger ladled out this pabulum by the gross; and since all people want to be a success, it sold.

But Horatio who wrote about success, never found it. He wrote for boys because he never became a man. He said, "It can be done," but he didn't do it. He was a tragic figure who late in life played the drum in the newsboys' parade, ate chocolate bars in his lonely room, and left on his desk the outline of another success story. Saddest of all, he never told his own story because he was lost in a false image of himself—an image overblown of something called success. He has been joined now by Willy Loman in *The Death of A Salesman*; for of him, too, it was said, "He never knew who he was." (For Horatio Alger see: *The Saturday Review Treasury*, 1957, p. 550 ff)

God made all of us big enough when he made us persons. We do not have to look at ourselves in a magnifying glass.

Nor, in the second place, do we have to look at ourselves in a shrinking glass.

The old Borneo custom of shrinking heads has many modern refinements. We have ways of making ourselves and others feel just one inch lower than a toadfrog. We may make our self image too small. This is dangerous. It allows us to justify little living. We can say, "But I'm not a plumbline builder. I give a little and take a little—I'm broadminded!" What do we mean? Are we saying, "I am dishonest?" We can decide that we do not expect much of ourselves. Sandlot fair play, good old-fashioned integrity, may be brushed away with an airy, "O, I'm not a fanatic!"

We can be hard on others, and easy on ourselves. Yes, we can look at ourselves little. But when we do, we have to spend our lives living with a little person.

Then to avoid accepting out littleness, we begin to deny it. This is the fatal step of self deception. This allows us to doctor big Truth so it will fit the dimensions of some truth. But in doing this we have to twist ourselves into becoming a fragment person because we are willing to be less than what Jesus called us to be, a "whole" person. None of us can openly agree to live with a little self so we shrink truth, trim honesty, and develop adjustable character. A close minister friend lost his wife through untimely death. I wrote a note of sympathy. His reply had this vivid sentence: "I am greatly diminished in mind, heart and soul. . . ." How true! And how easy it is for us to be greatly diminished through a slow but deliberate process of thinking ourselves little.

May I say in a brief, positive word that we look at ourselves unafraid in an undistorted mirror.

We do not have to doctor the mirror. We do not have to see ourselves as being bigger than we are, as being smaller than we are; but we do have to be willing to see ourselves as we actually are. A mirror must not be bribed.

We of the Christian tradition have God casting a vote for us, and

the assurance of Jesus going by our side through the whole campaign. He had a habit of taking people as he found them, and going from there. Afraid of life? Did he not speak confidently of giving us plenty of life? Jesus invested his faith, his hope, and his love in the worthfulness of ordinary people. Why should we reject ourselves? Jesus didn't.

We are unsure about man in our rapid and reckless world? Do we look at violence, fear, distrust, and doubt the power of man to bring it off with any note of honor? Do we know more about space than we do about spirit? Are we headed for scientific suicide? Has evil won the day—in us, in our world? Indeed! Don't forget that Jesus didn't suffocate in a world flowing with flowers, milk and honey. He wasn't swept away in a sea of roses. But he didn't curse man, reject God, and die! Instead, he loved man, lifted his last prayer to God, and went out, but not down, with all the banners of heaven flying! This is the heritage that we have in Jesus Christ.

He took us as we are, for what we are worth, and made us the hopeful pilgrims of a journey that does not stop until the last enemy, even death, has been put under foot. Do we know who we are? Not fully, I'm sure. In this life, we never will; but we believe that God knows who we are, and that is enough. We believe that Jesus knows us—better still, that he believes in us.

We are able to look into the mirror with steady and unafraid eyes. Why? Do we need a better word than that ancient one that said "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good."

*Let us pray:* O God, our Father, cease not to hold us in thy hands to mold us, fashion us, clay that we are, until we truly bear in us Thy image, through Jesus Christ, Amen.

## THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST: A DISCIPLE RESPONSE

G. HUGH WILSON

*Minister, Compton Heights Christian Church, St. Louis, Missouri*

The assignment to respond to Douglas Horton's *The United Church of Christ: Its Origins, Organization, and Role in the World Today* (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1962) involves more than a book review. Though there are some noteworthy things about the book itself, this is an opportunity to react to the newly-formed United Church, just as Professor Robert Paul used Loren Lair's book to react to the Disciples as a whole in the last issue of *The Scroll*.

First of all, a few comments regarding the author and the book are appropriate. Douglas Horton was executive secretary of the General Council of the Congregational-Christian Churches from 1938 to 1955, while the United Church was being created. Not only was he in a position to observe the negotiations, but he also was one of the active supporters of union, so that he became the "goat" for some anti-merger Congregationalists. He was, further, not simply a denominational executive but something of a theologian, teaching in seminaries and writing interpretations of congregationalism. He echoed Perry Miller's emphasis on the connectional or unitive aspect of congregationalism in colonial America:<sup>1</sup> local churches seldom felt themselves autonomous, but limited their freedom with concern for other churches and the Church.

This understanding of the author may help to answer the questions, how representative is he of the U.C.C. and how reliable is his interpretation? If our old categories have any meaning, it would seem that Horton is on the "right wing" of Congregational ecclesiology, which should place him somewhere in the middle of the U.C.C. A "left-wing" Congregationalist, over-emphasizing local independence, or a "right wing" Reformed churchman, overemphasizing central authority, might not be typical, but Horton should be somewhat representative of the new denomination.

He has chosen as the vehicle of his interpretation the Constitution of the U.C.C. Exposition of its phrases and sections form the outline of the book. One would suspect this approach of being stuffy and prosaic, but actually he more often commits the opposite error: i.e., he follows detours and combines the most elementary with the profound observations (e.g., see the chapters on the sacraments and the ministry).

Since all Disciples realize that the interest in the United Church is not merely abstract or academic, we shall examine Horton's interpretation with the possibility of union in mind. What does he say to the fears



and hopes that Disciples have regarding a union with the United Church of Christ? Does he heighten or pacify our qualms?

1. *The freedom of the local congregation.*

This is one concept which Disciples and Congregationalists have shared (though with shades of emphasis and understanding). This is also one element which anti-merger Congregationalists and anti-merger Disciples fear will be lost in union.

The Constitution and Horton's interpretation offer hope, however. The former limits itself to a definition and regulation of the procedures of the General Synod (the national body) and its instrumentalities (boards). It "describes" the relationships among General Synod, conferences, associations, and congregations, but "the pattern of relationships and procedures so described is recommended . . . to enable them more effectively to accomplish their tasks. . . ." Horton comments on the standards suggested by the whole church for its parts: ". . . no stigma of bad churchmanship" is attached to the act of a church which differs. "The United Church of Christ is a church which trusts its minorities; it even expects them at times to step out of the routine in order to make a new and signal contribution to the church in Christ's name." (p. 104) He is willing for a part of the church to differ, but "no part is left uncertain as to what the total church considers best." In this tension growth is engendered.

Another ecumenical Congregationalist, Truman Douglass, assures us in an essay in *The Challenge to Reunion* that Horton is not alone:

The local congregation, especially in a united Church, must have freedom to accept full responsibility for being the Church of God *in that place*. This is not a principle of atomism and anarchy; it is a principle of responsibility. . . . The local church must be free to be a manifestation of the Holy Catholic Church in a specific community. This requires a commodious charter of liberty. If it is to be genuinely responsible it must have full freedom to discern the shape of its mission in that particular place and to prosecute this mission with such program, organization, and leadership as are relevant to its own vision of the task.<sup>2</sup>

Horton goes on, however, to a position that Disciples have usually sought to avoid. If a local church takes a position that the whole church considers "antagonistic to the mind of Christ," exhortation and persuasion can be followed by breaking of fellowship. Disciples know too well from the controversies of the 1920's how difficult it is for persons to distinguish between those positions which are expressions of different understandings of the truth (the so-called area of "non-essentials") and those positions which constitute a violation of the truth (the so-called area of "essentials"). Many a liberal or open membership advocate would hesitate to accept the principle of ecclesiastical discipline, if for no

other reason, because he realizes that he might again be in a despised minority.

Despite this question, the U.C.C.'s Constitution safeguards the rights of congregations. Though some procedures are *recommended*, "nothing in this Constitution and the By-Laws of the United Church shall destroy or limit the right of each local church to continue to operate in the way customary to it. . . ." A local church is to be autonomous in the management of its affairs, including its organization, worship, education, admission of members, and calling of pastors. Furthermore, a local church can withdraw from the U.C.C. without forfeiting its property. (p. 135) Authority is to be only persuasive, says the Constitution: "Actions by, or decisions or advice emanating from, the General Synod, a Conference or an Association, should be held in the highest regard by every local church."

## 2. *Creeds.*

One of the chief scare-words for many Disciples is "creeds," so we give careful attention to Horton's interpretation of the simple constitutional phrase: the U.C.C. "claims as its own the faith of the historic Church expressed in the ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic insights of the Protestant Reformers."

Horton says much that is comforting to Disciples. He grants that all phrases in the creeds need not be affirmed, but there is "broader and essential truth" in the whole. He acknowledges that faith can never be fully represented in a theological statement and that such statements should not be used as tests of fellowship.

He challenges Disciple tradition, however, in insisting that creeds are inevitable, that it is naïve to dispense with them, that they are needed in teaching and in worship. Creeds are to be "taken seriously, but not absolutely."

A question still haunts us: how can creeds be used in teaching and worship without becoming tests. They may not be applied formally; yet they may restrict membership, in practice, to those who agree, who do some mental gymnastics, or who do not take them seriously enough to object. Would not frequent repetition make the nonconformist feel uncomfortable, emphasize his minority status, and foster guilt for his lack of "enlightened faith?"

In a united church, Disciples, it seems, must grant others the privilege of using creeds; but we should be granted freedom to abstain from their use without prejudice or ostracism.

## 3. *Baptism and open membership.*

Baptism is, perhaps, the most apparent difference between the U.C.C. and the Disciples. (This, it has been said, was one reason the Disciples

were not included in the original Blake-Pike Proposal—polity was enough to resolve without adding the problems of baptism.) The concern of Disciples at this point is accentuated by the Constitution's ambiguity. On the one hand, a local church is to be free to "admit members in its own way. . . ." (p. 135), which presumably would permit both open and closed membership policies. On the other hand, it is affirmed that "all persons who are or shall become members of a local church of the United Church of Christ are thereby members of the United Church of Christ." (p. 125) One way to resolve this ambiguity might be to permit local churches to determine how new members are to be admitted (adult baptism or infant baptism and confirmation), but to discourage the denial of membership to those who come from other congregations.

It does seem valid to expect that a united church will have free interchange of ministers and members, or union is little more than a form. This would, however, pose a very difficult and emotional problem for cooperative closed membership churches. A compromise which seems necessary is similar to the latitude granted in other instances by the Constitution. The normal, regular, "recommended" practice shall be what we call "open membership," but each church will be free to pursue the course it has traditionally followed. Only if this right is granted and only if closed membership churches feel no onus of inferiority can Disciples enter a united church without a serious split. Personally, I am not too optimistic about this compromise being satisfactory to either side, but it appears to be the only fruitful direction to explore at present.

#### 4. *Centralized autocracy or confusion?*

Since the relationship of Disciple boards, societies, commissions, and committees seems often to be a jungle, the relation of "instrumentalities" to the General Synod merits attention. Two principles are combined in the Constitution: (1) the Boards, etc. are to "administer their own program and financial affairs, and establish [their] own by-laws and rules of procedure . . .," and (2) the General Synod shall correlate their work, publicity, and promotion to prevent duplications and gain maximum efficiency. In theory, this should avoid both over-centralization and confusion. Just how it will work as boards from both denominations are merged and correlated is another matter. It is obvious, especially at this point, that Horton is describing the United Church idealistically, and it is too soon to know what it will be in reality.

There are also questions as to how the genius of the U.C.C. will evolve. Congregational and presbyterial elements were merged and Horton tries to show that episcopal features are present as well. The U.C.C. is described as administratively episcopal, legislatively presbyterial, and judicially congregational. One wonders if this is really distinctive, or if



similar claims to represent all three elements might not be justified by most denominations.

Those who wonder if the congregational concept will prevail, be modified, or be submerged are not likely to know with certainty for some time. Horton emphasizes the General Synod, which balances his stress on the local church. The General Synod is "*the* representative body" of the U.C.C. Unlike congregations, associations, or conferences, this synod can express the whole church's will. (p. 177) This is the "point of entrance for the Word of God to come to the whole church and thence to be disseminated to all the parts." (p. 187) The International Convention offers agencies, state conventions, groups of ministers, and local churches an opportunity to influence the whole, and something more may be expressed in the Assembly than the parts brought to it. If this is Horton's meaning, we agree; but it sounds as if truth comes through the central legislative body to be comprehended, adopted or adapted, and put into practice by regional and local parts. Disciples will be concerned about the direction in which the United Church develops.

##### *5. A split in Disciple ranks.*

What will happen if the conversations with the United Church result in union? Can a great majority of Disciples be educated, persuaded, and involved so as to accept union? It seems obvious that such a union would eliminate any healing of the cooperative-independent division, but perhaps that one is hopeless anyway. But what of the small, provincial churches who have a great deal of growing to do? What of the closed membership churches?

Congregationalists had the same problems, but they merged with a minimum of "Continuing Congregationalists." Is union worth the loss of half our churches? one-fourth? a third of our churches representing only a fourth of our membership and a tenth of our brotherhood financial support? There is some cost to be paid for union, but when is the dissident minority large enough to deter the majority? And what portion of the minority is likely ever to be involved in a union or even in cooperation?

To conclude, it seems that Disciples have two basic questions to confront as union is posed. First of all, are the risks of entering a united church before all the answers to our qualms are clear greater than the risks of letting the U.C.C. become "set" before Disciples enter the creative process of union. In view of the ambiguous and unsettled state of some crucial issues (e.g., the nature of the General Synod, the normal functions of congregations, the relation of Boards to the national body), some suggest that Disciples "wait-and-see." Others fear that the U.C.C. will soon become crystallized and will resist further change, despite its claim to be a "uniting church." Then Disciples might face a "take-it-or-



leave it" attitude on issues which are fluid in this formative stage. Pragmatically, which course offers the least risk and the greatest likelihood of success?

Secondly and more important is the theological question: what is God's will for the Disciples? Does he want us to express the oneness of Christ's body in a united church or remain separate to express our distinctive traits and particular understanding of the truth?

Some are quick to answer both questions in a positive, some in a negative, way based on presuppositions, fears, aspirations, and personal associations. Let us rather converse, consult, study, and find a thoroughly democratic way to express our will about this important matter so that as much concensus as possible can emerge.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. See his "Translator's Preface" in John Norton's *The Answer* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1958).

2. Page 168.





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